

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.**



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INDIAN CINEMATOGRAPH COMMITTEE.

QUESTIONNAIRE.

INSTRUCTIONS.

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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 outlook between the West and the East necessitate special consideration in the censorship of films in this country?

26. (a) Should more care be taken in censoring films likely to offend religious susceptibilities?

(b) Can you give an example of any film which has offended the religious susceptibilities of any class of the community?

27. (a) Have any of the films exhibited in India a tendency to misrepresent Western 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 Boards of Censors by a single Central Board?
(1) If so, why?
(2) Would this cause any inconvenience to the Trade?
(3) How should such a Central Board be constituted?
(4) Where should it be situated?
(b) Or, would you advocate a Central Board in addition to the Provincial Boards?
(c) If you advocate a Central Board working either alone or with Provincial Boards, how would you regulate the relationship between the various Boards and the Central and Local Governments?
(d) How should such a Board or Boards be financed?
35. (a) Is the present constitution of the Provincial Boards (of which at least half the Members must, under the law, be non-officials) satisfactory?
(b) Would you prefer a whole-time experienced well-paid officer as Censor at each centre, to be assisted by an Advisory Board of non-officials?
36. (a) Do you think that the present system (prevailing at Bombay and Calcutta) under which films are ordinarily examined by inspectors subordinate to the Board is satisfactory? Are such inspectors sufficiently well qualified for the work? What sort of qualifications are essential?
(b) Or do you think that all films should be examined by Members of the Board? If so, do you consider that gentlemen of suitable standing will be available who would be prepared to devote sufficient time to the examination of films for a reasonable remuneration?
37. (a) Are there adequate safeguards under the Act for preventing the exhibition of a film which may be objectionable locally although it has been passed by a Board in some other part of India?
(b) Do you consider that any safeguards are needed?
38. Do you know any instances of films which have been passed by a Board of Censors in one Province and found objectionable in another Province?
39. Have you come across any instances of pictures disapproved or banned from exhibition in the country of origin or in Great Britain being exhibited in India?
40. Should posters, handbills and advertisements of Cinema performances also be censored? What measures would you suggest for such censorship without undue restriction on freedom?
- Have you noticed any such advertisements which were objectionable? In what way were they objectionable?
41. Have you noticed any improvement in the moral standard of the films exhibited in India in recent years?
42. Have you any suggestions to make for getting the co-operation of the trade in the matter of the Censorship?
43. (a) Is there need for a stricter control over the import and export of films?
(b) If so, why?
(c) What methods should be adopted for this purpose?
44. To what extent could public bodies and the Press assist in maintaining a good standard of films?
45. (a) Should some control be exercised by Government over film-production, and if so what should be the nature of such control?
(b) Should all film-producing agencies be registered and licensed, and their studios periodically inspected?

NOTE.

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

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.

III

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. It 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. They 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. Ranganathan 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. Coatman: 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 utilized 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.

(b) *Vide* answer to question 3 above.

8. The Industry is at present non-existing in Madras. It has not yet come within the scope of the activities of the Department of Industries.

I believe the main difficulties besetting the Industry are lack of private enterprise and want of the knowledge and skill required for producing films of a suitable standard. In the early stages of the Industry, Government could assist it two ways:—

(1) by giving scholarships to young and enterprising Indians to enable them to undergo training in foreign countries which are centres of film production. This would probably involve the payment of heavy premia to film producing firms;

(2) by subsidising private enterprise.

13. The present customs tariff on imported films no doubt affects the exhibitors adversely, but unless the film producing industry, which is still new to India, gets fairly well established, there is no need to interfere with the present tariff on imported films or on materials connected with the film industry.

14 to 20. The exhibition by means of a portable apparatus of films relating to agriculture and industry in schools and of films relating to public health in rural areas would doubtless have an educative value. This propaganda work should be financed by Government and as already stated, scholarships might be given to Indian students to go to the West and study the art of film producing and exhibiting.

21. A State agency to undertake the management of the film industry as a monopoly is likely to stifle private enterprise.

24. Scenes depicting indecent voluptuousness will have a harmful effect on young minds. Emotional scenes are necessary to some extent but they should not misrepresent the normal conditions of society. I cannot say that Cinema shows have actually contributed to any increase of crime in this Province, but I think pictures showing highly ingenious methods of committing crimes should not be exhibited.

25 and 26. Yes.

28. No. As far as I know.

29. No.

30. No. Children might be left to the advice and guidance of their parents or guardians.

31 and 32. Yes.

33. A drastic exclusion of love and other emotional scenes is likely to result in a falling off in the attendance at cinemas.

34. No. Provincial Boards are necessary, as the habits and customs of various provinces differ and what is unoffending in one Province might be a source of trouble in another. A Central Board which could act as an appellate authority over the Provincial Boards might be a useful addition.

35 and 36. Examination of films by Members of a Board is decidedly better than by an Inspector of the Board.

37. Yes.

40. Yes. Posters and other advertisements should be subject to the same censorship as the films themselves.

Oral Evidence of the Honourable Khan Bahadur MUHAMMAD BAZLULLAH SAHIB BAHADUR, C.I.E., O.B.E., Director of Industries, Madras, on Thursday, the 5th January 1928.

Chairman : You are in charge of the industries of the Province?

A. Yes.

Q. I suppose there is absolutely no film-making here?

A. There is no film industry in Madras.

Q. There was, you remember?

A. Yes, when Mr. Venkaiah's son was doing it though very spasmodically.

Q. Do you know why it failed? Why they did not succeed?

A. Owing to lack of enterprise and lack of capital, I believe.

Q. I thought the young man went to England?

A. He has been to England.

Q. And then came back and started this studio?

A. But it did not thrive.

Q. Were you at that time the Director of Industries?

A. No.

Q. You have no official information as to how the thing fell through?

A. No.

Q. I suppose from your knowledge you think that Indian films are getting popular here, are they not?

A. Yes they are, particularly with the masses, the illiterate classes.

Q. Especially if they are coupled with religion or mythology?

A. Yes.

Q. And they have a habit here of showing Indian films on certain days, religious days.

A. On festival days, yes.

Q. Even at the cinemas which usually show only Western pictures?

A. Yes, occasionally they show Indian films, particularly on festival occasions.

Q. I notice you advocate scholarships being given to deserving lads to go abroad to learn the technique of film making?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you advocate that or would you advocate the bringing in of experts to train people here? Which do you think more advisable? What I have in mind is this. You know the National..... Association and also your own Government Department send scholars abroad for learning some industries there. I remember there was a report that they did not get sufficient insight; they are not allowed sufficient insight into the technique.

A. It was not so much that as the want of demand for the knowledge. Several students were sent out for various industries; they came back and they did not find openings for employment.

Q. You must have come into contact with those students who went abroad. Did they ever complain to you that they did not get facilities in Western countries for learning their various industries?

A. No, I have heard no such complaint.

Q. What subjects do you send students for?

A. We send them for the Textile Industries, the Leather Industry, the Sugar Industry, Ceramics, Electrical Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, and recently in Agricultural Engineering and paper making.

Q. There are now students getting Government aid?

A. Yes, and we pay fairly heavy premia to firms to show them all the methods of the industry.

Q. You have not found any difficulty in getting them admitted?

A. Not so far.

Q. Now which do you prefer—may I repeat the question—sending for experts on short term contracts to come out here and give technical training to our students here or sending scholars abroad to learn the technique?

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 effectively?

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. In 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 of 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 here?

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 Presidency 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. Coatman: 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. Coatman: 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. Coatman: 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 those 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 instance 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 5th 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 Madrasi 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 *bond 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 Nasik 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 Bergers?

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 a 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 sepoy classes misunderstand certain aspects?

A. I did not say sepoy 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 sepoy's 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 man or woman 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:

Kobinoor, 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.

(c) Films depicting low morals such as excessive drinking, daring thefts, murders, etc. It is harmful to the low and illiterate classes; it must induce them 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 8th January 1928.**

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

A. Yes, Sir.

Q. Have you a list of the cinemas in the presidency, both permanent and 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 cinneas.

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 fire appliances—that is for Madras town; the police do the rest. For the

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.
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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. Greenwood?

A. Yes, Sir.

Q. Have you a list of the cinemas in the presidency, both permanent and 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 cinneas.

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

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

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

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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?

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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 fire 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. Occasionally; I don't think they are making any headway though. My idea is there is less of these Indian films now in circuit.

Q. You don't get as many as before?

A. No.

Q. Is there any agency which gets second-hand films from Europe or America?

A. I don't know.

Q. Now as regards production here, what do you think are the steps that should be taken to encourage production of Indian films?

A. Loans under the State Aid to Industries Act.

Q. And expert assistance for photography and other things? Do you think experts may be sent for in order to assist these producers.

A. They are very expensive.

Q. But do you think that would improve the quality?

A. I think it will. Some of these Indian films I have seen are distinctly poor in acting and style compared to Western films.

Q. Do you think Government should take steps in that direction?

A. No, Sir.

Q. Then how do you think the industry will improve if left to itself. In fact it has not begun yet in Madras. In Bombay they have studios.

A. There was one in Madras which became bankrupt.

Q. Do you know anything about it and why it failed?

A. It was called the Star of the East Company. Why it failed I do not remember.

Q. Do you think there is plenty of scope for developing the industry in our province?

A. Oh, yes.

Q. Do you think the State Aid to Industries Act might be extended?

A. I don't know if it does apply but I imagine it should.

Q. And some sort of Government approval would encourage the growth of the industry?

A. Loans are the only thing I can think of.

Q. Now you say there are many films portraying murder, pick-pocketing, drunkenness and crimes of violence. You think there are many films of that sort being shown?

A. Yes.

Q. A large proportion?

A. No, not a large proportion—about a quarter or something of that sort. There is always one of these things in every programme.

Q. Do you mean in the serials?

A. Yes, they are the principal things that go in for these thrilling businesses.

Q. Where a great deal of action is shown?

A. Yes.

Q. You think there are many cases of murder and such things shown there in the serials?

A. Yes, too many of them.

Q. But you don't think the films of an immoral tendency are shown. You have only seen one film?

A. I have only seen one.

Q. So that you are more concerned with these films of a criminal nature, suggesting crimes or other criminal methods. That is your point of view?

A. Yes.

Q. What is it you have in mind with reference to these crimes in 24 (d). You think the censorship is not adequate?

A. Yes.

Q. You think it is not adequate in respect of these crime films?

A. Not enough discretion is used in withdrawing these things.

Q. With reference to 27, you want to prevent films which misrepresent normal conditions. Now do you think films can thrive if they represent merely normal conditions?

A. I should think they would. Of course I know the people want some sensation.

Q. And sensation cannot be normal, so that you don't go to see normal life when you go to a cinema show.

A. No, you want something out of the way.

Q. And therefore I was wondering what you had in mind in your answer there. You say the censorship should prevent films which misrepresent normal western conditions.

A. Perhaps that is badly put. Take the American films. They contain cabaret scenes with wild dancing on the table by half-attired ladies—well, that is not normal.

Q. Of course not, but still that is a normal form of amusement.

A. No, I don't think it is, only in filmdom, not in ordinary life by any means.

Q. You don't think it is a true picture of cabaret life.

A. No. It is exaggerated.

Q. Even that is exaggerated?

A. Yes.

Q. Of course, cabaret life is an exaggeration of normal life but even that you think is exaggerated on the screen?

A. Very much so, specially with these disappearing views. You have a sort of pie on the table and out of the pie will come an almost naked woman. You don't get that in any cabaret.

Q. You think the censorship is not adequate in that respect also?

A. Yes.

Q. Well what about 29. "Not to be exhibited to persons under 14 years of age". Would you class the films?

A. Yes, so that if such a film is shown it will be a definite crime and the man can be prosecuted.

Q. But don't you think there are practical difficulties in applying such a rule. Who is to decide whether a boy or a girl is 14 years of age?

A. There will be great difficulties unfortunately.

Q. Which would you prefer—supposing the Censorship Board were to classify films and say this is in good taste or of good moral tone—do you think that would be enough to deal with this evil, the likelihood of injury to children?

A. I think the board should say definitely they don't want young children to see certain films.

Q. Merely as a matter of advice?

A. Oh no; such films should not be shown to juniors.

Q. You mean it should be a matter of prohibition?

A. Yes, the board is thoroughly entitled to do so; it is the keeper of the moral conscience of a particular area.

Q. It may not be moral considerations that are involved. Children may be affected more by seeing violent scenes. You think it should be "not fit to be shown to children"—a thing like that would be useful?

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.

Q. You have mentioned instances of successful Indian films. There are three cinema producing companies—the Kohinur, the Hindustan, and Madans. The first two are Bombay concerns and Madans produce in Bengal. We have been told that productions in other parts of India are not very often popular in areas where the local conditions are different. Is that your experience too?

A. No, I think I have not seen enough to have any opinion on that.

Q. With regard to the question of registration of films in the local police stations, we have been told that the exhibitors are required to issue too many free passes to the police. That is their complaint. So the police are bound to be there, whether the film is taken to the police station or not. And thus the police would have an opportunity of viewing the film in any case.

A. I think they go there more for amusement than in an official sense. It is not their definite object to see whether a film has been passed or not passed; whether it is an approved film or not. They may get there late or early, just as they please.

Q. You don't think it would be easier to lay the obligation on the police than upon the trade to do the needful in this matter?

A. I think it is not difficult for the man; when he gets his box of films from the supplier, he can take it then and there and shows it to the police.

Mr. Coatsman: These 9 theatres in Madras, are they all within the corporation or not?

A. Yes.

Q. And which of the 3 are owned by Madans?

A. The Elphinstone, the Gaiety and the Crown.

Q. They are the three leading theatres?

A. The Crown is out of the way. The Wellington is the leading theatre.

Q. Who owns that?

A. Rustomji, a man in Bombay. Rustomji Dorabji, I think. The other three are all Madans.

Q. They are in the centre of the town?

A. The Elphinstone and Gaiety are near Bosotto's Hotel. The Wellington is further up. The Crown is 3 miles away.

Q. Which is the most popular of the three—The Wellington, The Elphinstone and The Gaiety?

A. The Elphinstone.

Q. In fact, I suppose that is the real "posh" theatre—to use the current slang. Is that the one to which Europeans would normally go?

A. About equal with the Wellington. The Elphinstone, I think, has a big Indian clientele. They run fairly equal. They are the premier theatres.

Mr. Green: Can you tell us what charges travelling cinemas make for seats?

A. The least I have heard of is one anna and it is not a seat, it is on the floor.

Q. And the highest?

A. One rupee, two rupees for the very highest seats.

Q. I suppose the majority are very low prices?

A. Yes—two to four annas.

Q. I take it that in this Presidency, prices are still, as compared to many other parts of India, relatively low.

A. I really don't know the other parts. Compared with Calcutta, they are. Cinemas in Calcutta are Rs. 3. The highest here is Rs. 2.

Q. I was thinking more of the wages paid in Madras.

A. Must be. I have heard of a pianist drawing Rs. 12 a month putting in six hours a day.

Q. Therefore it follows they cannot afford to pay very high prices when they go to the cinema?

A. Yes.

Q. And the inevitable result of that is that they get poor films?

A. Yes.

Q. And you suggest the trouble about poor films is that they are definitely bad for the eyes. You want them back for recensoring after a time. Is that properly a duty for the board of censors to exercise? Their duties surely are moral rather than medical?

A. Why should it not be their duty?

Q. I was thinking of their capabilities; they are not doctors.

A. Well, have a doctor on the board.

Q. I quite sympathise with your object, but I don't see how it can be worked.

A. I think it can be worked by giving a period to their certificates which should be on that form—to be valid up to that date and to come back in due course.

Q. I take it that travelling cinemas would go out of existence if they did not continue to show such poor stuff.

A. I would rather they went out of existence than show these things which are medically harmful.

Q. I was not quite clear, in your answer to the chairman, if your view is that crime films actually incite to crime?

A. I think they do.

Q. Do you think that in that matter we can safely be guided by the opinions expressed by various police officers in evidence before us?

A. They would be the best guide.

Col. Crawford: I notice in answer to question 4 in referring to these second quality films you also say "second quality in moral worth". Do you mean that they tend towards immorality? What do you mean?

A. These extravagances in murder, robbery, drunkenness. I think the highest class of audience does not care for that, and the highest class of theatre does not show that.

Q. No, it is mainly in the older American films. They are possibly giving it up.

A. I think that is the reason why the poorer cinemas get these films of second moral worth.

Q. Now you mention the question that you had some doubt as to whether a good number of uncensored films were not being shown in the mofussil. You quoted one particular instance. The fact that that film was available makes you suspect that they are showing uncensored films in the mofussil.

A. I think they are.

Q. Have you any other definite evidence?

A. No. I have heard, but could never get any proof, occasionally of cinema shows being shown in private houses.

Mr. Green: That does not come under the Act.

Col. Crawford: But not in public places?

A. There is no control. If a film of that low class can be produced with a day's notice, it must be easy to get hold of it in various centres.

Mr. Green: Anybody can stock uncertified films. Only before exhibiting they have to be censored. There must always be a considerable stock of films awaiting exhibition and inspection by the censor.

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 28 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 36-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.

I. 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 85 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 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 the particular aspect of the photographic art is seen at its best. In India 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.

(e) 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. If 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 scene behind the actors. He wonders at the

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, etc., 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 left 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 handbills. 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. You don't expect any difficulties from the exhibitors to exhibit these films. Do you 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 consisted of. 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 8 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 small 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 comics. The comics 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 exhibitors 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?

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 Zindah Sahib Bahadur: My idea was that if it was practicable 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 Addition & Co., produced a film describing the manufacture of cars. Most of these films were made locally.

Q. Am I right in thinking, Mr. Krishnaswami 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 Zindah 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 elum 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?

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

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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 and inspect them and report to you? And when he says that a film is good you are satisfied?

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.

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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 18," 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 films 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.

In Part I, Question 14, it is asked whether there is a demand for much films. 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 AYL., 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. Where the parents are of the opinion that their children would not benefit from a 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 AYL., 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 also tired. Both are tired and they go and sit under a smoky oil lamp of 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 organization 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 with bhajana and prayers, and then occasionally we may give a cinema show 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 in a Government studio or do you think in this province they can be produced by private agencies with subsidies given by Government?

A. It is not possible for Government, I think, to produce all the films we 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 films 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 several young men whose minds may probably be affected in that way.

Q. But you don't 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 consider the films shown now, which you see ordinarily exhibited, are not objectionable in their tone?

A. I cannot definitely 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 the ordinary revenues or from any special revenues?

A. I think it will be unpopular if we raise special funds.

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 the point.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: You know the corporation is 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 corporation from the money they get?

A. Yes.

Q. Have you approached the Government on the subject of your central 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 young men much bad blood will be created by seeing battles in which one party will be 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 bills 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 other 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 at all children are to be given any education in cinema shows, these 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 fees 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.

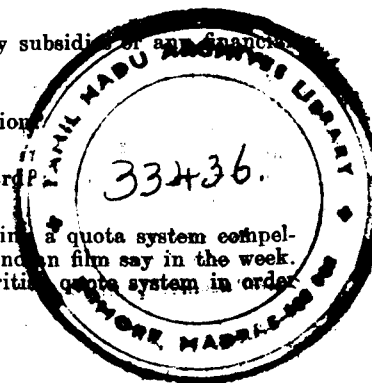
24. (a) Certainly not.
 (b) Not to my knowledge.
 (c) I cannot say.
 (d) (1) and (2) Yes.
 (e) No.
 25. No.
 26. (a) I have no knowledge of films that do offend.
 27. (a) No. I cannot say. I cannot say. No.
 (b) No.
 28. (a) and (b) I do not think.
 29. Not in the present class of films shewn.
 30. No.
 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.

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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 subsidising or 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.

8. (a) Yes.

(b) (1) and (2) I should think that most of the subjects mentioned in (a) 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 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. 8,000 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 8,000 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 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. Coatsman: 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 vicious films.

***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. And 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 80,000 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. Coatsman: 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 November 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 palanquin 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 others 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 deposes 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 deposes 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 Tatterey 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. Coatman: 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?

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- 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 result 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. No, 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 necessarily 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?

A. I 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 those 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 on 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 $\frac{1}{2}$ 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. V. 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. V. 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 mind?

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.

***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 "Khamsa 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 Peria Puranam) 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—as (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 film-

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.

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?

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. SARVOTHAM 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 raise 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. SARVOTHAMA RAO AVARGAL,
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, whichever 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 “Messilina” 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 Vakil, 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. 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 these 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 offended 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 Mahommedan 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.

Raw materials like sensitive films, finer chemicals, etc., should be imported without duty.

14. Certainly—our educational system requires our own films taken from 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-timed 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 say 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 managements 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 there 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 every-day. 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 there 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. Y. 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 those 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 Dahanan,

(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 quandum 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 manufactures 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?

A. 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 when 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 countries 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. 2½ 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. 1½ 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 it 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

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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
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(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 Anusoooya.
- (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 patrons. 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 AYERGA, 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.

- 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 8th 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 audiences, 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 Yakil, 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 reform and social life and industrial

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 Yakil, 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 Bezwada 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, Bezwada, 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. Coatsman: 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. Neogy: 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 comical films. I take it that means that you think there is a market for comical 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. Coatsman: 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.

A. Does it not come under the latter part? There is nothing here to tie the hands of Government.

Q. I think Mr. Neogy has in mind some notes which were written in the department.

Mr. Neogy: Let us leave it at that. It is a question of opinion. But 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 Governments 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. He 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 respect of 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 all countries 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.

1 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

interest on the Railway and instructing both our staff and the general public in Railway matters.

2. Of the Railway clerical staff in Madras, 10 to 20 per cent. visit the cinemas, the majority of these once a month. The same proportion would apply to Workshop Staff who live in Madras. Of the staff who visit the cinema, about one third or say 5 per cent. of our total clerical and shop staff resident in Madras, visit the cinema once a week. The greater proportion of the Railway staff live at stations where they have little opportunity of visiting the cinema.

3. I understand the most popular are those dealing with Hindu Religious subjects. I have been given the following names of attractive films:—

Birth of Sri Krishna.

Krishna Leela.

Valli's Wedding.

Of foreign films I understand "Harry Lloyd" or Adventure films of the style of "Tarzan of the Apes" are most popular.

4. I do not go to cinemas often but have noticed some very poor audiences.

5. In making preliminary enquiries in connection with a Railway cinema I have not been offered Indian films; this may be that I have not enquired at the right places.

6. Indian films would be more popular than Western films. In Southern India films dealing with Hindu Religious subjects will appeal to both educated and illiterate classes.

7—8. No remarks.

9. I anticipate difficulty in obtaining the films, I would like to get for a Railway cinema. There appears to be no difficulty in obtaining a programme of American films as chosen by the suppliers but apparently a small exhibitor has little option in selecting films.

10. I understand a system of block booking exists but have very little knowledge of the method.

11. I don't think facilities for previewing exist in Southern India.

12—13. No remarks.

14. I consider films dealing with Agriculture, Public Health, Safety First, would be most useful. The Railway also want films dealing with the use of machines and labour saving devices and educating the public in the steps to take to increase their own comfort and secure safety of goods in transit.

I consider such films would be appreciated and can be made entertaining. The local production of such films should assist the local film industry. A certain proportion of the films must be taken in Southern India.

15, 16 and 17. No remarks.

18. I consider the only suitable action which can be taken by Government is to assist financially in the production of educational films referred to in the answer to 14.

19. No information.

20. Yes. Assistance in producing Educational films with a local setting would involve Government expenditure. When such films are available I consider Government might insist on a certain proportion of educational films being exhibited in Cinema Houses. Certain Government films might be hired at commercial rates to exhibitors. The expenditure would for the most part be recouped by indirect benefits.

21. I do not consider it would be desirable to grant a monopoly for film production either to a firm or to a State Agency.

22. The exhibition of Indian films abroad and of Imperial films in India should lead to a better mutual understanding. To ensure a due proportion of Indian films being exhibited abroad an official scheme of exchange would probably be required.

23. See generally 22. No further remarks.

PART II.

The question of a moral censorship of films hardly affects any proposals contemplated by the Railway, provided it is possible to obtain films without the necessity of blind booking.

Oral Evidence of Mr. R. W. MOSS, Deputy Agent, Madras and Southern Mahratta Railway, Madras, on Tuesday, the 10th January 1928.

Chairman: I see the Madras and Southern Mahratta Railway believe in the spread of the cinema in their area for educational purposes and also for safety first propaganda?

A. We propose starting a travelling cinema in the very near future and it will aim at educational films in addition to entertainment films. We want to get entertainment films partly to entertain our railway staff at country stations where they have not got opportunities of visiting cinemas.

Q. They have no other amusement worth mentioning?

A. Yes. We do not intend to confine ourselves to railway audiences, but we want to get the public to come.

Q. I suppose you will have something in the nature of a travelling cinema train or something of that sort?

A. Yes, we propose a cinema carriage.

Q. Making halts at various places and giving exhibitions?

A. Yes, on the lines that the G. I. P. are doing it. They were the railway that started it.

Q. For that purpose you would require a lot of films which you do not get now?

A. We have only started and we have had very little chance of going into the question of what films we can get, but the offers that have been made have all been in connection with the ordinary programme of films of an ordinary picture house, and it does not suit us because we want to devote a considerable section of the exhibition to educational films, and that means that we must be able to get one or two entertainment films . . .

Q. You want to give more education, in the general sense of the term, rather than mere entertainment, that is your object?

A. We want to sandwich the two together, as much education as we think the people will stand.

Q. You find it difficult to get them?

A. I have not yet been able to get hold of what I want.

Q. And you think that if Government had a library of films of an educational character that would be of great use to people like you who want to show films, if they can lend them out at reasonable rates?

A. At the moment I understand that the number of firms prepared to hire films in India is very limited and they do not hire individual films . . .

Q. You want more educational films relating to India?

A. I want to get two sets of educational films. I want films showing both how a thing ought to be done and how it should not be done in India, and then I want to supplement that by a film showing how it is done in two or three other countries, the ordinary procedure of a crowd taking tickets at the ticket window, the forming of queues and so on.

Q. To give effect to your object you would require both Indian films and foreign films of an educational character?

A. Yes.

Q. Indian films of an educational character are not now produced.

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 those 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.

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.

Q. Have you been in correspondence with the central publicity officer of the Railway Board?

A. We had a certain amount of correspondence, I think, but I understand up to recently they have not got any films for transmission here or for loan.

Q. Is there any chance of the different railways co-operating particularly for the cinema activities through the Railway Board?

A. The idea of developing the cinema in connection with the railways is a new one and I think a Safety First film taken in Northern India may not be suitable to us in the south just as a similar subject taken here may not suit Northern India.

Q. You said you have not taken any steps with regard to the recruiting of the staff?

A. No.

Q. Have you ever considered the idea of recruiting one or two men and sending them to England or America or Germany?

A. No; I do not think after all it will be worth while; because we will only be exhibiting in the initial stages with one exhibiting apparatus, and we cannot afford to take any very extensive steps. If however the Central Government or the central railway establishment is going to educate men for taking films, I think we will be interested in the matter and will co-operate.

Q. Would you like the Railway Board to take up this matter through its publicity officer and recruit one or two men to be trained as experts in printing and so on?

A. I am afraid it will take time.

Q. Do you think, in order to produce really good pictures and get a high degree of excellence and imagination into the work, it is worth while spending large sums of money on training people in Europe and other places?

A. I do not think we could afford the cost. If a central staff is trained I think they will have to keep in touch with the cinema progress in other parts of the world at fairly frequent intervals. Otherwise, we will lag behind.

Q. From the beginning of our enquiries, we have taken opinion on the possibility of getting Government to take the initiative in some way or other in developing the film industry and particularly in producing propaganda films for their own departments. I think the railways are in a far more favourable position than any Government departments to start with useful films on a reasonable scale, because before the commercial element comes in, you can spend some money on it and get some decent returns. Do you think it would be worth while suggesting to the Railway Board that they should go into this matter carefully and see if they cannot favour the idea of recruiting and training a competent establishment, the cost to be paid by all the different railways?

A. But there will be the other difficulty, whether we can make all the films we want. A central staff might perhaps be able to make a large proportion of the educational films, but a certain proportion must come from abroad, because we must know what is being done by other railways. If we are going to make free shows paying, then I think a number of imported films will be necessary.

Q. Do you think it will be worth while for the agents of railways at the next conference to consider this matter?

A. I think it has been considered generally in connection with the publicity work on railways. I think the Railway Board itself is pressing on all railways to take up work of this kind.

Q. Have you seen the memorandum of the Railway Board on the introduction of the cinemas in the railways?

A. I have seen a certain number of leaflets from the Publicity Board.

Mr. Green: Do you believe that the railways by film publicity will eventually benefit directly or indirectly?

A. We expect to get an immediate benefit.

Q. I take it there would be increasing efficiency in your own staff and also increasing efficiency in production?

A. Yes, there will be improved relations with the public generally. If we can show things relating to public safety and describe sufficiently what the public should do under particular circumstances and all that. I think there will be less friction. It may be beneficial in that way.

Q. Do you think the Government in its various departments can do a lot in the same way and rightly incur a certain expenditure on cinema propaganda even though such a thing cannot bring big amounts to the treasury?

A. I think so, especially in subjects like public health. We have got a very heavy death-rate in India and it is probably because it is very difficult to get at the bulk of the people scattered about in small villages, although you are spending a lot. The cinema film ought to be able to do a large portion of such work.

Q. Although you welcome a central authority to produce films, you are apprehensive that it would be difficult to work that central authority?

A. Yes, if it is a purely Government body. I think it would be much better if it is a commercial body.

Q. Do you think that it would be better to have a properly constituted company, the Government contributing a certain proportion of the capital and guaranteeing a certain interest if the company would produce propaganda films?

A. Yes; it should also undertake entertainment films. If there is a company of that sort, I think it must run on commercial lines. I do not think it should be restricted entirely to educational films or instructional films; but unless some caution is used, I do not know how it can be a commercial success. I do not think there can be any difficulty in so running it. I would prefer largely to see a company in that form rather than have a direct Government department to undertake the work.

Q. The company will operate all over India?

A. Of course it must operate all over India.

Colonel Crawford: Have you asked any private agency to contract for the production of these things?

A. No.

Q. I think you said that you have budgetted Rs. 10,000 for this purpose?

A. That is purely for film production.

Q. I presume you will agree that the activities of the railways in this direction would be very useful to the film industry on the score of their spreading the cinema habit?

A. Yes.

Q. Could not much of these activities be handed over to private agencies later on?

A. I do not know how far we can get private agencies to exhibit these things. That cannot, in my opinion, be contemplated in the near future, because our intention is not to exhibit them in any of the larger centres where films already exist but to exhibit them only in moderate-sized villages.

Q. Anyhow you think it is possible of development in the future?

A. Yes.

Q. But it does appear that you will get some kind of encouragement?

A. All we want to do is to give certain instruction and produce certain results, as far as the cinema is concerned.

Q. You will also be enjoying certain indirect benefits?

A. I think there will be some benefit.

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. Do 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. Do 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 to 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.

Q. Do you 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 in 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 *mara 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 they 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. I know, but the Moplah population, the agricultural population, of your part?
A. The Moplah schoolboys go.
- Q. 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 Madura where I was running cinemas (and am still connected at Madura and Madras) and also to the various mufusil 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 mufusil 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 Prahladha of the Hindustan Film Company, Pathi-bakthi of Messrs. Madan Theatres Limited, Gulebakavali of the Kohinoor Film Company, and Alaudin 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 short-sightedness 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 motuasil 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 loses 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 Mohammedans.

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 65,870 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:—

Untied States	20,500
Europe	19,773
Far East	3,892
Latin America	1,932
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 overselves. 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 Madans' 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 Madans 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. 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.

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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 can be 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?

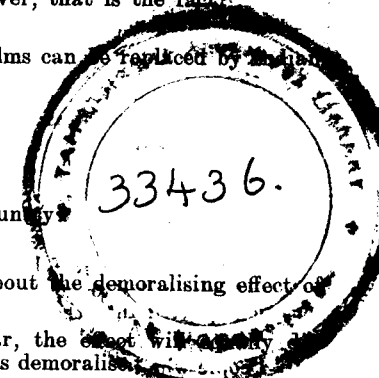
A. Yes, when the films themselves disappear, the effect will disappear. But I do not believe that western films demoralise.

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.



Q. It is quite natural and human and I quite agree with you. I see you are a believer in abolishing drink in order to encourage the growth of cinema habit?

A. The American industry has grown on account of that to a very great extent. Common language is another very great thing.

Q. You cannot get over that difficulty?

A. Certainly. Government can help us by means of compulsory education.

Q. In one language?

A. Something is better than nothing.

Q. Do you mean that 20 million Tamil population will agree to compulsory education only in Hindi?

A. I am not talking of Hindi. If they can understand Tamil, then we can have titles in Tamil.

Q. I thought you wanted to have a common language. As regards block booking and blind booking, do you really think that there is block booking and blind booking in the sense in which they are understood?

A. Absolutely, not at all.

Q. You know what you are getting? I suppose you get western films long after they have been exhibited in their own country?

A. I cannot say that.

Q. Do you get them simultaneously?

A. Not simultaneously, but not at such a big interval as some seem to think. We get them as early as we can.

Q. You know what you are getting?

A. Yes.

Q. There is no such thing as booking blindly for all that is produced in a particular studio?

A. No. This blind booking and block booking is the natural result of the growth of the trade in America. For 1928 whatever pictures an American studio or an English studio is going to produce, they publish them beforehand, and the cinema owner has got his confidence in the technique of the picture, etc., its drawing and pulling power, the star who is appearing in it, the particular novel or story they are basing the film on, and so on. The cinema owner makes a contract for the whole year. In India the cinema owner does not know what he is going to produce or have next year.

Q. About western pictures, is there any blind and block booking from Indian importers?

A. A few attempted to do it but they failed.

Q. It is not prevalent to a large extent?

A. Some of these clever people in the line wanted to do it, but they failed.

Q. What I want to know is the effect. Something like 14 million feet of film are imported into the country?

A. Yes.

Q. People who import, do they know what they are booking for, or do they enter into it blindly?

A. The theatres who make this arrangement are few.

Q. You say some people do enter into these contracts?

A. Yes, some big companies like Madans, the Universal, Pathe.....

Q. Madans import?

A. Yes.

Q. The Universal have got their agency?

A. They have got their own agency here.

Q. So it is not a case of importer?

A. Pathes and First National have got their own branches here.

Q. What I want to know is whether an importer imports goods of other peoples' production without knowing what they are?

A. That is whether an importer purchases a film from a foreign country without knowing about the quality of the film?

Q. Without knowing what it is he is going to get?

A. The importer in the line with certain experience knows exactly what roughly will be the quality of the picture, what roughly will be the story, the pulling power of the picture he imports.....

Q. You are not following my question. What we were told in Bombay and Calcutta was this, that the importer knows beforehand from the trade journals what it is he is going in for, and therefore there is no such thing as blind booking in the sense in which it prevails in America and other countries.

A. There has been a misconception between myself and yourself.

Q. First of all let us deal with the importer in this country.

A. The importer knows fairly well what sort of picture he wants.

Q. Now from the importer let us come to the exhibitor. Does the exhibitor know what he is getting from the importer?

A. Some people in the trade who are following the trade journals know.

Q. The others are merely ignorant, but there is opportunity for knowing.

A. There is not much of an opportunity for knowing.

Q. Why not?

A. If he cares to know.....

Q. The opportunity for knowing is there. It is only his ignorance that stands in the way. The exhibitor is to be blamed.

A. Yes, if there is blind booking at all.

Q. He has the opportunity of knowing if he wants to know?

A. Yes.

Q. But, of course, the exhibitor has to enter into a contract with the importer that he will take so many films.

A. Yes, a number of pictures for the year irrespective of whether they are good or bad.

Q. That is, bulk contracts.

A. It has become serious in England and America but it is not so in India. The Films Bill in England is directed against this blind booking and block booking because it does not give an opportunity for an independent British producer to book his pictures because an exhibitor's contract for the year is tied up with an American company. But here in India there is no such contracting.

Q. The exhibitor is not compelled to exhibit only a certain class of pictures. I mean by contract. There is no such contract here?

A. If there is a contract, there is the sanctity of contract and he has got to do it. But generally renting firms cannot supply so many pictures. Even Madan's themselves cannot supply so many pictures a year. So there is not any strict enforcement of rights.

Q. The evil does not exist here?

A. No.

Q. Does it exist at all in connection with Indian productions?

A. Except in the city of Bombay it does not exist.

Q. Never mind Bombay. I want to know whether the exhibitor or renter here is put to any disadvantage by any system prevailing in the trade either of block booking or blind booking.

A. 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 more popular.

Mr. Neogy: And more costly.

A. I was not referring to the cost but to the greater rentals that go to Indian film producing companies rather than to American companies.

Chairman: Have you ever calculated what is the length of films produced 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

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 ourselves.

Q. Now, I notice you are strongly in favour of the organisation of the industry.

A. Yes, Sir.

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 of 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 when 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 upkeep-ment, 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.

3. 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 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 is 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 interiors 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, scenics 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.

Q. Do you know people who take them for Christian Missionaries like that and send abroad?

A. No, I don't know.

Q. Does anyone see your films before you send them out?

A. No, nobody sees them.

Q. You simply send them by post?

A. Yes.

Q. And have you to take out a license for taking films?

A. No, nothing.

Q. Or for developing them?

A. No, nothing.

Q. I suppose you don't use any electric energy in your place?

A. Just the ordinary electric supply, that is all.

Q. Now you are not dealing in any importing or renting or hiring of films?

A. No, nothing.

Q. You know nothing of the trade in that direction?

A. No.

Q. I suppose 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 films 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 incidents in 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. How will you know if they cut out anything?

A. They return the rejected parts to us.

Q. You say that local boards and municipalities should open cinemas more?

A. Yes, that would create a market and encourage people to go in for 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 80 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. No, I don't think so.

Q. If you wanted to get your topical put in the British Empire topical review, how would you go about it?

A. I have no idea.

Q. Have you thought of approaching the Indian Trade Commissioner or the High Commissioner?

A. No, I have not thought of that.

Q. You have tried no other country at present?

A. You see, I did not go and find out about England because my films would also be 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 should be submitted to the censor before they are exported in order to see that films derogatory to India are not exported. How would that affect your business?

A. For instance, supposing I am sending undeveloped news films, how will I show it to the censors?

Q. That is the point. It is an undeveloped negative. Therefore if this 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 any such restriction?

A. Evidently not, because no one would know whether it was news films 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. Coatman: 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. Coatman: 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. Coatman: 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 (Madrssa).
Indian pets:—
The bulbul.
The Mangoose.
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 Madras.
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, Yoorhees College, Vellore, 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.

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	400
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.

8. 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 6,000 to 7,000 feet representing about 1 1/2 to 1 3/4 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 "Krishnajaanma" 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.

8. 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 questionnaire 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 and 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 would 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 Pathe 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 200 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 Elphinstone 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 the late Mr. Gokhale. I was then experimenting with films. One day at about 3 o'clock I got information that Mr. Gokhale was dead. I had to hurry up, I had not a good outfit then, but I made my own makeshifts, ran to the place and took one or two scenes from the top of a theatre nearly 40 feet from the 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 such 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 in Bombay 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. So, I added the photograph of Mr. Gokhale.

Q. That was your only attempt?

A. Afterwards I took some scenes during the Sivaratri festival in Bombay and sent a few to Pathe News. They accepted only about 13 or 16 feet of it, one of the scenes being that of the Congress meetings at Chowpati. Then again during the Prince of Wales' visit, I bought some films from Vernons' and sent about 400 or 500 feet to a firm in America. I bought it at Re. 1 or about that but got Rs. 3; the whole thing was not however accepted. They accepted only about 160 feet and even for that I did not get my money for about a year until I threatened them.

Q. We had the evidence of a young man in Madras this morning who is apparently doing well in this business of producing films for United States consumption.

A. It might be that he is provided with up-to-date machinery, or he has nothing else to do.

Q. You have no practical experience of the exhibition side or the renting 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 monopoly. I may instance, Mr. Das of Benares who had a number of theatres under 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. 1-8-0 to Rs. 2 will be a fair estimate. It all depends upon 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. 1-8-0 provided trainage and other expenses for long distances are separately paid for.

Q. What is the profit that you will get out of it?

A. From 4 to 6 annas. Sometimes there may be a waste of the whole film. There is an element of chance in it.

Q. Are you satisfied with the general tone of the pictures shown nowadays 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 censorship 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.

Q. 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 Government 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 schools 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 and novels 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 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 amusement?

A. They would have got into mischief and therefore 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 Cocogem 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. Coatman: 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. Coatman 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. Coatman: 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

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.—1. 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 1923.

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. Coatsman: 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 to 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 have 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,

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 traveling 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 young man 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. Coatman: 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. Coatman: 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. of

Kolhapur; 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, Mount Road, Bangalore Cantonment and Wellington.

Some of the really successful Indian films are:—

Srikrishna Janma and Kalia Mardan, of Hindustan Cinema Film Co.

Gula-Bhakavali 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 or 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 re-acting 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 immorality

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 comics 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 around 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.

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 Tinidivanam, 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 total banning of 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., Razia 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 booked 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.

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 be 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 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 clean 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. You 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 Sinhagad, 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. By any educated man.

Q. I do not know whether we 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 show Indian films is very small.

Q. Is it out of bounds?

A. The Indian cinemas are unfortunately out of the bounds for the troops.

Q. Indian troops?

A. I do not know, whether Indian troops or European troops.

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-a-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 he be a child.

Q. It ceases to interest him?

A. Yes, the same thing as reading novels.

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. Again after 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 importers

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 ever 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 slum 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 slum 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?

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 moffussil 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 moffussil 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 Vakil, 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,

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, Dasavatars 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 Dutsche 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 undertaking 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 beastly 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 Vakil, 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 westerns.

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. Coatman: 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, and 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 Jamma 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 burden-some 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 photographing 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 400 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 wholetime Government Superintendent of the Board with a small clerical staff. To this Board should be attached an advisory committee composed of members from 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 points which will promote the film Industry and at the same time try to give wholesome amusement to the public. They should not lose sight of the recreative, educational 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 the 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 ask him to effect change in the story, etc. This is suggested because the system that prevails at present is not good and the producers first produce the films in 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 the advice

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 whole-time 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 patronize 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.

3. Mythological, Puranic and Historical Films produced in India were very popular at the initial stage. The amazing and record-breaking popularity of Phalkes 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.

As against this 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, Lankadahanam, 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 *invisibile*, 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--Phalkes 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 effects lack realism while the films themselves run to disproportionate lengths. Several films running to 8 and 9 reels might as well be shown in 4 or 5 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 should ban films which are badly photographed and defectively titled. In this connection I might say that the titling of Hindusthan Films and Madans Indian Films is very good. One more regrettable feature is that the producers 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 Tannaliraman 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 debasing 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 Mohamadians; 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 demoralizing. 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 Boards 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 description as 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 and Calcutta. I believe that my answers to questions 34 and 35 deal exhaustively with this aspect.

37. I believe that the Police Officers are invested with some powers to stop Films. Madans "Pati Bhakti" was censored by the Bengal Board. But during its exhibition in Madras in 1923 I understand that the Police interfered and cut off an obscene dance from it. In the schemes suggested by me in the foregoing pages are worked out I believe that such safeguards are unnecessary.

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 comments 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 certain dramas we get lower than that.

Q. The minimum will be about 50? It varies from Rs. 50 to Rs. 200?

A. 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 for publicity work and public health work. Attached to it you would have to 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 man 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. That 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 from a friend 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

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.**

- 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 unfailing 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 permanences 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 Mudaliar 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 Mudaliar 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. Cuniah, 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 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 shewn 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 shewn.

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 indecent 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 "super-natural" 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 head-master 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

picture, sword 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?

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 Padonma 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?

A. Not very.

Q. But slightly?

A. Yes, slightly.

Q. In what direction? In connection with love affairs?

A. Yes, according to the European point of view, that is civilisation, but according to the Burman point of view, it is not so.

Q. You don't want to see the Burmans copying the conditions of the west?

A. Not wholly, only some.

Q. Do you believe in the use of the film for educating the people on public health, etc.?

A. Yes, I do.

Q. Very strongly?

A. Yes.

Q. Would you favour Government taking action?

A. Yes.

Q. You think that the work should be done by the Government or by the existing cinema companies?

A. By the cinema companies with the help of the Government.

Q. Do you live in Rangoon?

A. Yes, always in Rangoon.

Q. You know places outside Rangoon?

A. I know the villages where I have gone on duty.

Q. In what districts?

A. Munli, Beshir, etc.

Q. Not frequently I suppose?

A. Only seldom.

Mr. Neogy: You said that you expect Government to give some assistance to the Burman film industry? In what way would you like to have that help?

A. I would like them to give enough funds. There are not sufficient funds for the industry now.

Q. As loans?

A. Yes, or as a sort of donation.

Q. In what respects do you think the Burman pictures need improvement?

A. As it is, the Burman films are very small, say 10 or 15 ft. If they have more money, I think they will make better ones.

Q. Your view is that if they have the money, they will themselves put things right?

A. Yes.

Q. Finance is their only difficulty now?

A. Yes.

Mr. Green: Do the Burman films now produced bring any good return?

A. Yes, quick returns.

Q. In six months?

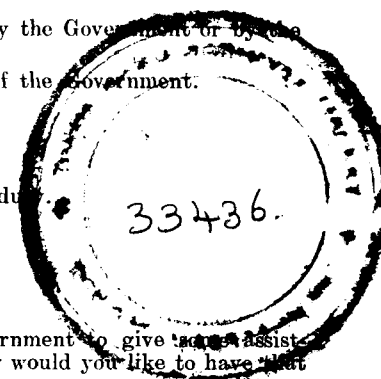
A. They can make profit in about a year's time.

Q. Why do you want the Government to help them?

A. Because the Burman films are only in the initial stage and the business has not enough funds. They cannot go on.

Colonel Crawford: Do you yourself prefer to see a Burman film or a western film?

A. I should like to see both, particularly the Burman film.



Written Statement of Lieut.-Col. E. BISSET, M.B., Ch.B., D.P.H.,
I.M.S., Director of Public Health, Burma, dated the 4th January
1928.

INTRODUCTORY.

1. No special knowledge.
2. (a) Educated Indians frequent cinemas showing Western films. The illiterate classes frequent cinemas showing Indian or Burmese pictures. During the last 10 years or so the interest has increased gradually, but not to any great extent (Rangoon).
- (b) The composition of an audience varies in accordance with the type or variety of film exhibited. If an Indian film is exhibited, the audience is purely Indian; if a Burmese film is shown, it is Burman; if a Western film the audience is mixed.
- (c) No particular knowledge.

PART I.

3. Indian and Burmese films take the first place, and next to them Western pictures depicting exciting dramas, cow-boy stories, serials, and comic films.
4. As far as my knowledge goes they are catering adequately.
5. Yes.
 - (a) Poor quality.
 - (b) Quite popular.
 - (c) No knowledge.
6. (a) To purely Indian audiences they would be quite popular, but in a big cosmopolitan city like Rangoon, where the audience is mixed, it would appeal only to a section of it.
- (b) I cannot say.
7. I am not aware of any special films being shown to British and Indian troops. They visit the cinemas in the town.
8. (a) Production is very poor, and on a very small scale.
- (b) Perhaps lack of skill in production.
9. Good pictures are obtainable. Prices not known. I am not aware of any monopoly or any tendency to a monopoly of this trade in India.
10. No information.
11. No knowledge.
- No suggestions.
12. There being no such tax in Rangoon, an opinion cannot be expressed.
13. I am not in a position to express an opinion.
14. An increased use of the cinema for educational purposes in schools and for adult education in Agriculture, and Public Health,—set by Government or other agency,—would be very welcome, and deserves great encouragement. I consider that the results would be of the greatest benefit to the country. The demand must be created. Few such films have been put before the people up to the present.
15. Yes.
 - (a) Long seasons of fair weather.
 - (b) Good scenery.
 - (c) Cheap labour.
16. The native talent is there. It only needs developing and competitive instincts aroused.
17. Cannot say.

18. Yes. Encouragement could be given by Government by giving producers every possible facility, by lessening customs duty, or other assessment which may be in the way,—provided such productions are submitted for approval to the assisting Government.

19. No exact information;—but in India, the cost of labour being low, the cost of the film also would be less,—but unless mass production is proposed as in America the cost would be necessarily high.

20. (a) Educational and Public Health films interwoven with attractive plots and acted by convincing actors would be of very considerable value in the country, and such an agency of propaganda is urgently needed.

(b) No.

21. My own opinion is that such a scheme would be excellent but I cannot conjecture how it would be received by exhibitors in this country, where, as elsewhere, cinemas are commercial concerns rather than agencies for social, educational, and public health benefit.

22. I have no knowledge of this question whereon to base an opinion, but as regards (b) I do not think that a better understanding can be produced by films unless corroborated in the Press wherefrom the majority of persons formulate their impressions and opinions.

23. (a) I do not think that much is desirable or possible in this respect as conditions and needs in different nations vary too greatly. Films necessarily play mainly on the emotions and competitive or ambitious emotions aroused can easily slip from a desire to emulate into other channels.

(b) No.

24. (a) Opinions differ, but the majority of the films are satisfactory.

(b) Not aware of any.

(c) Here also opinions differ, but talking generally nude pictures, or pictures suggesting dishonour, divorce cases, uncontrolled passions, and insufficiently clad females arouse harmful emotions in both young and old, as can be proved by listening to remarks passed outside as the audience departs after the performance is over (e.g., "The Queen of Sheba"). I also strongly disapprove of mixed boxing films which invariably result in racial partisan feelings being evinced.

(d) (1) No, judging by certain films seen in Rangoon.

(2) Adequate.

(e) I cannot say.

(f) Nil.

25. Most certainly and my personal opinion is that the Board of Censors should be stricter than they are.

26. (a) As far as my knowledge goes, the question has not arisen.

(b) No.

27. (a) I think that certain films must inevitably result in lowering the prestige of Western women, who, of whatever nationality they may actually be, are invariably regarded as British by the majority of Easterns in the Indian Empire. Stricter censorship could eliminate all this.

(b) Indian civilisation as far as I know is not misrepresented, as very little of it is understood by the producers in America where most of the films are made, but Indian characters are generally depicted in shady roles, which is much resented by educated Indians and this fact should be brought to the notice of the producers. Also in the letter-press unnecessary epithets and remarks against Easterns are sometimes put into the mouths of Westerns who would probably under such circumstances never have used them at all.

28. (a) No knowledge hereon.

(b) No knowledge hereon.

29. No, because human nature is very inquisitive, and the more you prevent a particular section from seeing a film, the more you are liable to excite their curiosity on the subject.

30. Looking at it broad-mindedly,—no,—for films should be fit for exhibition before all, and I doubt if children understand all that they see. For psychological reasons I do not think children under ten years should be admitted.

31. (a) Yes, if the Board is properly constituted and performs its duties faithfully and without being influenced from external sources.

32. The Commissioner of Police, Rangoon, has been requested to supply a copy of constitution.

33. (a) I have not sufficient experience to answer this question, but in accordance with my remarks under 31 (a) I see no reason why any difference should be made by stricter censorship.

(b), (c) Possible, but a matter of opinion or for experiment.

34. (a) Only a local board can know that which is most suitable for that particular Province in consonance with the peculiar characteristics of the people.

(b) No necessity.

(c) and (d) Do not arise.

35. (a) Yes, so far as I know.

(b) No.

36. (a) I do not know.

(b) One can only prove by experiment in calling for applicants for such posts.

37. (a) Yes. I regret I have not had an opportunity of studying the Act hitherto.

(b) No.

38. Don't know. No experience in this matter.

39. No. No experience in this matter.

40. Yes, unless such posters only depict episodes in the censored film.

41. I have not hitherto studied this question.

42. No suggestions.

43. I do not know to what extent illicit or uncensored films are shown.

44. By educating and improving public opinion and encouraging better types of films.

45. (a) Official control should not be exercised as it would be unpopular, but films for purposes of health propaganda should be financed and produced by Government and distributed either free or at a very nominal cost. I prefer the former.

(b) I suggest that periodical inspection should be omitted, but only by registering and licensing can pressure be brought to bear upon recalcitrant agencies.

Oral Evidence of Major G. G. JOLLY, C.I.E., M.B., Ch.B., D.P.H., D.T.M.&H., I.M.S., Assistant Director of Public Health, Rangoon, on Tuesday, the 17th January 1928.

Chairman: You are the Assistant Director of Public Health?

A. Yes.

Q. You have seen the memorandum of the Director of Public Health?

A. Yes.

Q. You are in general agreement with that?

A. Yes, except one or two details where there may be personal views.

Q. You think that propaganda for educational and public health films would be popular in the country if good subjects and proper actors could be got?

A. I absolutely agree with you. It is a very important point.

Q. Of course you would include in them those in respect of agricultural methods, etc.?

A. I have not much experience of these subjects; but as regards public health my own belief is that, we can do a great deal of teaching on public health and education by making use of films for this educational work. I am sure we can do a very great deal.

Q. What are you doing now in that direction?

A. We have just made a month or two ago our first film which concentrates round a village story in order to drive home to the people simple lessons on Cholera, and that is to be shown in the coming Health Week which commences on the 6th February. If that is popular, it will certainly be taken round the country.

Q. Have you a large sum for this purpose?

A. That is a great trouble. We have not got anything like enough money for this purpose. We have had an allotment of somewhere between 3 and 4 thousand rupees with which to purchase films. With that we can purchase anything from 5 to 10 copies of films already prepared; but I fear if we have to prepare our own films, it will barely cover the cost of one.

Q. Have you thought about the question as to how to prepare those films?

A. I have thought a good deal about it and I was very interested in seeing some of the films in Calcutta that have been prepared in other provinces for public health purposes at the Recent Congress of Tropical Medicines. After all I think public health experts are not cinema experts, and it seems to me therefore that the only way in which public health films production could be done is by the co-operation of our department with some agency, either private or Government, who could give technical advice for the preparation of the film.

Q. That is, you giving the subject-matter and they giving the advice?

A. Yes, they can take up the photography, and give directions as to how to make the story attractive and so on.

Mr. Green: I take it you have no technical knowledge?

A. I have no knowledge at all beyond knowledge of photography.

Chairman: Have you considered or enquired whether you could make use of the existing producing agencies for producing your films?

A. I have made a certain amount of enquiries. The one we have prepared so far was made by a local photographer, Mr. Samuels, who produced the film. I myself drafted the story, the first time I ever attempted anything of this sort. We got Mr. Samuels to do the photography and to actually make the film, and he produced the majority of the actors, although we produced one or two; for instance, a sub-assistant surgeon had to come in and give cholera inoculation. That is why I think that co-operation is necessary; otherwise the photographer himself or the company would not appreciate the technical points of the film.

Q. Did you find that production fairly satisfactory?

A. I think it is fairly good, but I do not think it is as good as I expected it would be. It is not quite of the same high standard as we expected to have. We want something better.

Q. You would prefer a Government studio for preparing such things or you would employ private agencies and give them this work?

A. I think it is a point on which it is a little difficult to give my personal opinion. We are a little new to it. If a Central Governmental agency is to produce films for all Governmental purposes, we would be very glad ourselves, but I do not know whether we can run a Government agency only for public health purposes.

Q. A Government studio will of course be useful not only for public health films but also for educational films and for other propaganda work?

A. Then I think it will be extremely useful to our department. We can make use of such an agency.

Q. You think all the departments should co-operate and there should be a technical expert to produce films?

A. Yes, that would be very useful indeed.

Q. Of course, you know there is the objection that there are private agencies who can produce them and the policy of the Government should be to encourage such agencies by giving orders for films; because the Government studio may be more costly than having a private agency?

A. Yes. As regards public health, so far as I know, there is no private agency in Burma now capable of doing this; for example, the taking of micro-photographs to show the parasite of cholera or the malaria parasite. Things of that sort we would have to do with skilled persons in our own laboratories.

Q. Which is the best form of aiding the industry? That is the question we are now concerned with. If the Government started a studio, whether it be a Central Government studio or a Provincial Government studio, it should be equipped with the necessary expert advice which might be available?

A. Then I think that for technical films a Government studio will be the most hopeful line; because, relatively speaking, it will not be work which will be useful to the private producer but will be work of a rather specialised nature.

Q. Will it be a commercial proposition?

A. It is not a commercial proposition at all.

Q. You would have no objection to use a central studio. But there are other people in other provinces who say that a central studio would be far too stiff for them to get what they want, that there would be official red tape and other difficulties, and that Provincial Governments should have their own way?

A. By a central studio you mean a central studio in India?

Q. Yes.

A. I am afraid that for our purposes it will be too far away. We would like to have a studio for ourselves in Burma.

Q. In any event you want to have a studio in Burma?

A. In any event I think we will require a Provincial studio.

Q. Central studio, if there are any, may prepare films which may be common to all the provinces and which may be commonly availed of, and provincial peculiarities would be given a local colour?

A. Quite so. In the case of technical films, the central studio could do the laboratory side and the other portions might be attended to locally.

Q. So, there must be co-operation between the central studio and the provincial studios?

A. Yes.

Q. So the ideal thing is to have a central studio to attend to all common things for all the provinces and for Provincial Governments to have provincial studios?

A. Yes, that will be ideal. If we have a provincial studio in each province, it will meet the case; but we might also have a central studio; that is what occurs to me.

Q. But where foreign films can be used, the central studio can also act as a central library?

A. Yes. We have found in Burma that all our propaganda, that is to say, leaflets with illustrations and stories and magic lanterns, slides, films, etc., all Indian material has to be Burmanised before it has much value in Burma. We cannot make use of the material produced by the Hygiene or publicity departments of the other provinces.

Q. How do you Burmanise it?

A. We have a local Hygiene publicity bureau here under a Burman medical officer and if we get ideas and suggestions from other provinces, we will re-write or modify them or introduce local colour into them.

Q. That is to say, you will change the character, the subject of the story or the customs, and so on?

A. Yes. It may sometimes be a case of re-editing rather than a case of re-producing a thing, although if the stories do not fit it, we will have to re-write them.

Q. Have you ever tried showing Indian films here, on public health?

A. No. We have no Indian films at the present moment. The public health films are not very many at present. It is a young side of the industry. We have now between 12 and 15 films altogether for propaganda work and they are mainly American. I saw two Indian films. I saw them in Calcutta and Peshawar. One was a maternity film prepared in Bengal where the whole subject-matter and scenes and everything were quite unsuited to Burma and the other was the Kumb-mela pilgrimage in the United Provinces which again would not appeal to us here at all.

Q. You think the difference is due to diversity in the subject-matter?

A. My impression on seeing it was that it would not be suitable to us. In the United Provinces it may be useful, but here the conditions are very different. They might be shown only for amusement, but they will fail here as educational films.

Q. Any way you consider that public money should be spent in this direction and that this is an urgent matter?

A. Yes, I think this is an urgent matter.

Q. Whether it be by way of Government studio or by way of aiding private agencies, you want the films?

A. Certainly.

Q. You don't think there is any monopoly or any tendency to monopoly in the trade?

A. I do not think so.

Q. I hope Burman films are becoming more and more attractive to the Burmans?

A. I think so. I have only seen perhaps one or two of the Burman films myself, but from the audiences they are getting, I think they are steadily progressing.

Q. You think that the Government should give private industry such aid as they can possibly give for developing this industry in the country?

A. You mean for amusement purposes?

Q. Yes.

A. For amusement purposes I think encouragement might be given. I do not go so far as to say that for mere amusement Government money should be given. It is rather a different principle. For educational purposes, I think Government money must be given.

Chairman: In answer to question No. 22 you have stated: "I do not think.....opinions." That is the answer to question No. 22 (b). What do you mean?

A. I have not actually written it myself but I noticed on reading through it and I gathered that though the wording is not clear, the intention is that the press is a very great power in encouraging better class films, and I think the intention is to make more use of press propaganda to effect this.

Q. The idea is to get one country to know the other country better?

A. That is absolutely sound. That is the idea.

Q. More by mutual agreement between Governments than by legislation?

A. This is not a subject that we can legislate upon.

Q. Mutual agreement between the various Governments and the various departments?

A. That is the best way.

Q. Now you are satisfied with the majority of the films which you have seen?

A. Yes.

Q. As regards their moral tone?

A. Yes.

Q. I mean western films. You have seen mostly western films and you do not think there is any demoralising effect?

A. In the case of the majority of them not directly. I think when trashy films are shown they have a demoralising effect.

Q. When you go for amusement and see the thing you really think it leaves an impression even on the habitual cinema-goer?

A. I think it undoubtedly does; it is all education and I think each film that is seen must leave an impression which in the case of poor quality, either artistically or morally, will have, a cumulative effect. It is all regarded as educative and so the film is of very great importance.

Q. Do you think there is any such injury which is produced by the film now being shown which calls for any remedy?

A. I have seen one or two poor films, almost bordering on the indecent, but not very many and I think strict censorship should check the thing.

Q. Occasionally it might.

A. It is difficult certainly to stop everything. There must be lapses in human institutions, especially when the censorship board members are in disagreement.

Q. We have seen that the Board of Censors have held different opinions.

A. I can quite understand that and as a matter of fact the answer to question No. 24 (c), although I did not write it suggests the type of film one would rule out. But barring that the Censorship board must not be too strict.

Q. Of course, you agree that such complaints as are pointed out now are more or less over-puritanism.

A. I think there is a tendency to over-stress it. I have been reading the Report of the Delegation of British Social Hygiene Council and I saw a good deal of this delegation here.

Q. Have you read paragraph 1 there?

A. I have read the whole of it.

Q. I don't know whether you have read the same as is contained in this? (Chairman handed the book).

A. The substance of it will be the same and it struck me that it was unnecessarily stressed. I think they may possibly have been unfortunate in seeing a certain number of lax films.

Q. We have yet to find the persons to whom they refer.

A. Yes.

Q. They have travelled through several prominent places.

A. Yes.

Q. Paragraph 1 concerns your department. Do you agree that the increase of disease is due to the cinema?

A. I think it is a doubtful statement. I think venereal disease is so common that the cinema cannot certainly be blamed for increasing it.

Q. And again she says educationists and representatives of citizens. We should like to know in Burma who are the educationists and representatives

of citizens who gave the information to the Social Hygiene delegation which visited this country last year.

A. Well, I belong to neither of these classes. As regards public health I should certainly say that we have no evidence that the cinema has played any part in increasing venereal disease, in the dissemination of the disease. I know of no evidence to that effect.

Q. As regards handbills and posters, have you found any objectionable posters.

A. I remember some collected by Mrs. Neville Rolfe. Some of them were certainly suggestive and some of them struck me as things that should not be published.

Q. Because of undity?

A. Yes.

Q. But do you think that the trade should be asked to submit the posters and other things for censorship. Did you see a very large number of them?

A. I only saw a few of them.

Q. She says that they were handed over to her by some educational man in this Province.

A. I don't know. I am afraid I don't know who supplied the information but I remember seeing some of them.

Q. The Government of India wrote to her and she replied some gentlemen in Mandalay gave them to her. They were not many.

A. I only saw a few.

Q. Of the few, to how many did you take exception?

A. I saw somewhere about 3 or 4 notices which I thought were hardly suited to be broadcasted to the public. Highly suggestive and slightly indecent.

Mr. Neogy: With reference to the local film which you got produced, you state that it was the best you could get under the circumstances. In what respects would you like to see this improved.

A. I believe the photography could be much improved. I think we got the best that could be done locally but I understand in order to get the best results one requires a well equipped studio. That film was taken during the rains when the light was not good, but the photography might have been better, acting might have been better. That is the present standard we have reached in Burma. I think we ought to reach in the near future a much higher standard. Production and the photography require to be improved.

Q. What portion of the scenes were actually taken outdoor?

A. I think something like $\frac{2}{3}$ or $\frac{3}{4}$.

Q. And then the rains interfered?

A. The air was clear but the light was not strong.

Q. Do you think the Burmese films can have a market in the West?

A. I do not think at present.

Q. You have mentioned posters which appeared to you to be indecent. What are they?

A. I have not seen such a film though Major Bilderbeck referred to one in the answer to the questionnaire. I have not seen any film that was definitely indecent.

Q. Even in the Government studio, the departments concerned would have to supply the story.

A. Undoubtedly.

Q. Proper shaping, is all that you look to in the technician?

A. Yes.

Q. And supposing you had to depend upon the Central Government studio somewhere in India and we had an expert director in such a studio, would

you still require some personal instruction to be given to him in regard to details?

A. I think it would be very difficult to produce in India films for Burma with sufficient local colour.

Q. Apart from that, would you require instructions to be given to the producer?

A. Undoubtedly. He should have minute instructions and for that purpose and for that purpose alone we would want him near at hand. He could not be given sufficient instructions by post.

Mr. Green: You had one film prepared by Mr. Samuels. Could you tell us what it cost you approximately?

A. Yes, I think Rs. 3,500.

Q. For what length of film?

A. About 2,500 ft. and the rate I remember was Re. 1-8-4 per ft. I don't know if this works out correctly. Mr. Samuels was anxious to produce a successful result and may not have charged full rates.

Q. Have you got the negative?

A. I am not quite sure. Our agreement included the negative. But I think the negative remains with Mr. Samuels and we get prints from him.

Q. What does he charge for extra prints?

A. I could find that out.

Q. It would be interesting.

A. I will make a note of this point.

Q. You pointed out that a central studio would not be of much use in Burma. You would like to have a studio in Burma itself for the production of these films under Government control. Do you mean, permanent buildings, lighting, etc.?

A. I think we ought to have a building, a place where we can do the photography. I do not know much about the technical details.

Q. But would it be necessary for developing, printing, and so on, to be done in Burma?

A. It is all a question of time and the cost of developing. Of course these are not matters of great urgency. It is a technical point and I am not competent to speak.

Q. Do you think it would be possible to have the film produced in a studio in, say, Calcutta or Delhi, if you have the scenery, the Burmese actors and all that?

A. Probably it would be more costly.

Q. It would be better to do it here?

A. Yes.

Q. If you have the studio here?

A. It would be cheaper to bring the technician across here than to take actors, scenery, etc., to India.

Q. The Cameramen?

A. Yes. I am thinking of the Burmese scenery, Burman people, Burman customs. Even the simplest thing is so different from India that to produce in India a Burman film would be very difficult.

Q. The cameramen can come across.

A. Yes; but I am doubtful whether the demands on his time elsewhere might not mean delay. I feel that Burma should have special consideration and should have a separate studio. Burma is very different from any part of India where a central studio for Upper India and one for Southern India might meet the needs of India.

Q. You pointed out that certain parts of Public Health films, the technical parts in particular, would be identical. Would it be possible to go a little further and say that the frame work of your films would be identical?

A. Yes.

Q. Human nature being everywhere the same, the frame work would be the same. You would have to build upon it and modify?

A. Yes.

Q. Then you would welcome some such central body which could say, "this is our standard type," would that suit you?

A. Yes.

Q. It would be cheaper in the production and it would save more time than if you had to do them locally?

A. Of course; but I have spent six years in Burma and one thing that has impressed me is that with the very great differences in our propaganda work in that it is not possible for us to hope to use the Indian material. For example, even in the photo we have to alter the story to suit Burman customs. The facts are different. We had a very fine example in a story prepared for the British Empire Leprosy Relief Association (Indian Branch) for propaganda work, the story of an Indian named leper. We had comparatively little use for it as it stood. We had to change all the illustrations and the plot also.

Colonel Crawford: I think the diseases are identical. The majority of them and the treatment also.

A. Yes; the preventive also would often be identical. Inoculation, and so on though methods require to be modified to suit the people concerned.

Q. The objection to inoculation would be more or less on the same superstitious grounds in all places. I can give you, perhaps, a better example of what I mean from plague. In other countries we make use of extensive rat destruction in dealing with plague outbreaks but in Burma we have to deal with the Buddhist objection to taking life, even that of the rat.

Written Statement of Dr. G. R. T. ROSS, I.E.S., Professor, University College, Rangoon.

I can reply only to very few of the questions because I have attended very few cinema performances during recent years. The reasons for that are that (apart from the discomfort involved by sitting for any length of time in a picture house in the East) I do not find commercial, i.e., paying films attractive.

1. Even in films claiming to display the actual events named in the programme (e.g., the Pathe Gazette), the action is much too rapid and too jerky.

2. In films in which the persons seen are acting a part not only does the above objections hold, but the play or story filmed is always highly melodramatic. Sentiment and conduct are alike impossible, yet it is suggested that they are real.

3. There is also the suspicion that a great deal of the 'real' action that forms the setting of a play or is supposed to be performed by the actors is fake.

The sort of film that attracts me is either one adhering to strict realism or one that is frankly farce.

The questions which I have not indicated are those to which I cannot reply.

1. No.

2. I am told that the most popular films in Rangoon are those showing action, e.g., cowboy life.

6. (b) Those showing stirring action. There is very little scope for Indian topical news. Rangoon takes no interest in what happens in Calcutta, Delhi

or Bombay. These places, I imagine, take as little interest in Rangoon or in each other.

Stories, however, might be constructed showing exciting incidents like races between boats, the swimming of rivers, chasing of dacoits, etc. I have suggested this to a local company of film producers.

14. Yes. It would increase the number of people employed in the industry.

The demand would have to come from the Education and other departments. In places of amusement there would normally be a 'thin house'.

18. Yes. See answer to 14.

20. (a) Yes. I think teaching through the eye especially with slow motion pictures very valuable.

23. (a) Largely, in schools.

25. Yes, in the censorship of Western films.

27. (a) Many films must mis-represent the West to the East.

(1) In general the melo-dramatic nature of the action will not deceive a western audience which knows how much nonsense there is in it. The eastern audience has no experience to give it a standard of judgment in western life.

(2) Again the prominence given in Western films as a whole to "crooks", "vamps" and their dissolute associates suggests that western society consists very largely of such person.

(3) There is also mis-representation of a subtler kind. For example the natural behaviour of perfectly innocent lovers in the west is shocking according to Burmese ideas and the moral characters of those who behave so must be misjudged.

31. (a) Yes.

33. (b) It might.

Oral Evidence of Dr. G. R. T. ROSS, I.E.S., Professor, University College, Rangoon, on the 17th January 1928.

Chairman: I think Dr. Ross, you seldom go to the Cinema and more seldom recently?

A. Yes, that is so.

Q. I notice you would rather fancy adhering to strict realism or what is frankly farce?

A. Yes, that is my taste.

Q. I would rather trouble you only on one point, that is about the use of films for educational purposes. Do you attach any value to that?

A. Yes. I think it would help very much in teaching in schools such subjects as Geography, customs, about their country's habits, animal life, how industries are conducted, etc.

Q. And also for mass education?

A. Well, if people want to be educated like that.

Q. Don't you think for propaganda purposes such as agricultural implements, hygienic methods such as suggested by the Director of Public Health, Cinemas would be a proper means for imparting mass education?

A. I have not bestowed much attention on that, but if the villagers interest themselves that way or are instructed to attend such performances it is all the better.

Q. Well you can make it attractive to the masses by mixing it up with other entertainments?

A. Yes, that would be all right, I think. It would be interesting to discuss that topic but I would first require to visit the film entertainment given in that way and make up my mind after observation about the behaviour of the audience, etc.

Q. I hope you have seen educational films in Europe?

A. I have seen some, but I suppose they would be given in Educational institutions. I was fascinated myself in Natural History films but this was exhibited at a special conference. I don't think these educational films were ever used for propaganda work.

Q. Have you been in touch with the Social Hygiene Delegation when they came here?

A. I attended one of the meetings.

Q. Had you any discussion with Mrs. Neville Rolfe on the subject of the Cinema?

A. There was some talk about the Cinema between myself and Mrs. Rolfe, and I disagreed with her in most respects, but I do not remember discussing the cinema with her.

Q. Do you agree with the view that by lowering the moral standard, the cinema would lead to the dissemination of disease?

A. It is very difficult to prove that statement, but of course I believe that immoral scenes do lower the standard, other things being equal. I would say that some films do tend to lower the standard of conduct. I see some objectionable advertisements from time to time, that have a fondness for displaying such things as verge upon the obscene. I have seen some advertisements, about 70 beauties in bathing costume, etc., and I did not like them.

Mr. Green: The film is quite harmless; not obscene at all.

A. And still the Board of Censors have got to attend to them. I dislike most of these advertisements, especially the Americanism of them.

Chairman: Anyway they are not matters for censorship?

A. I think it is a bit too troublesome, to censor advertisements. I would object to a lot of them, but I don't think Censors need interfere.

Colonel Crawford: In answer to question 27 you say that some misrepresentation will occur. Is it necessary to do anything on that account?

A. I don't know whether anything could be done.

Q. Do you think education will do it?

A. I suppose there must be some amount of adjustment finally.

Mr. Green: In answer to question 6-b you say "Rangoon takes no interest in what happens in Calcutta, Delhi or Bombay. These places, I imagine, take as little interest in Rangoon or in each other". Don't you think there is any possibility for the Cinema increasing interest in other parts of the Indian Empire and possibly other parts of the World? Cannot it have an educative effect?

A. You would have to create interest first, I should think.

Q. One witness told us to-day that the Burman audience like Burman films better than anything else. Is there any tendency like that in Rangoon?

A. I believe so.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: Have you any cinema outfit in your College?

A. No.

Q. You would like to have one, I suppose?

A. It might be good to teach Geography, Geology and Physics. I have not thought much about that subject really.

Q. Well, if all Colleges will have one, it would help the industry, would it not?

A. I think slow motion pictures would be of interest, like bullets going through glass, etc.

Q. You would prefer the slide of the Magic lantern?

A. For merely educational purposes, I believe, the magic lantern is better, because the cinema is too rapid. Still it shows action which the magic lantern cannot.

Q. Do you think many boys of your College will come forward to act as actors on a small remuneration?

A. I should not think so.

Q. You have some amateur dramatic performances in your College?

A. Yes.

Q. I think many students will come forward to take part in the production of films?

A. I don't think so.

Q. To supply the necessary outfit for the preparation of educational films, what steps should Government take for the collection of the required money?

A. I have not thought about it at all. I think Government should help to supply educational films, but I have not thought how the money could be obtained. I have no information about provincial finance.

Q. You have seen the Burmese films?

A. I have not, but I have seen Burmese studios where the films are being produced. I saw a new one the other day.

Chairman: Thank you Dr. Ross.

Oral Evidence of Mr. KYAW, Public Prosecutor, Rangoon, on Wednesday, the 18th January 1928.

Chairman: How long you have been the Public Prosecutor?

A. I have been Public Prosecutor for a little over 3 years.

Q. And before that?

A. I was practising at the Bar.

Q. For how many years?

A. From 1915.

Q. I suppose you are a resident of Rangoon?

A. From 1918 I am here.

Q. Do you frequent the cinema?

A. Not very often.

Q. Have you seen our questionnaire?

A. Yes, I have seen it.

Q. On what part would you like to say anything? Have you been taking any interest in the cinema industry or not?

A. No.

Q. So whatever knowledge you have derived is from what you saw on the screen?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you see the Burmese films often?

A. Yes, I have seen some Burmese films.

Q. They appear to be very popular?

A. With the Burmese population.

Q. And supposing the Burmese films had also English captions or other vernacular captions. Do you think the Chinese would go and see the Burman films?

A. Quite possible.

Q. You think it is quite possible?

A. Yes. Most of the half-caste Chinamen also go to the Burmese films.

Q. Do you go to the Chinese films at all?

A. I have never seen one.

Q. Burmans don't go to Chinese films?

A. I cannot say.

Q. You don't know?

A. No, Sir.

Q. Have you seen any Indian films at all here?

A. Yes, I have seen 2 films.

Q. Do Burmans go there? Or was it an exception in your case?

A. Because they showed here, there were Burmans also.

Q. To see the Indian picture you mean?

A. Yes.

Q. Who form the bulk of the audience?

A. Mostly Indians. Generally very few Burmans go there. But there are some cases. A picture known as "The Life of Lord Buddha" was shown and I think several people went to see that.

Q. I was told that there was some objection to that film here in Burma. Do you know what was the objection?

A. It was thought, I think, that Lord Buddha had a number of followers, I mean a very large following, in India. In the picture itself the following is so small, I think only about half-a-dozen, the public thought that it was a disgrace to show a picture like that. It is more due to this, I think, that it was objected to.

Q. The fact that he had not a sufficient number of disciples was the only objection?

A. Yes. That is what I was told at that time.

Q. I heard it said somewhere that they don't like Buddha shown as a man or something of that sort.

A. I have not heard of it. There has been Burman acting of the Life of Buddha.

Q. The Life of Buddha acted in Burmese?

A. I mean in puppet shows, in order to show that it is not an objection.

Q. I remember to have read that the objection was to Buddha being shown as a man.

A. I don't think so, so far as I am aware of it.

Q. It was shown all over India without any objection, but in Burma there was objection?

A. Yes. As far as I know the reason is what I stated, because I talked over the matter with my friends who went to see it.

Q. Did they inform the producers or persons who exhibited the film here what the nature of the objection was?

A. I don't know.

Q. This is what I find. In a letter from the President of the Burma Board of Censors in 1924 you see what is stated: "The film went to Burma and it was stated that, according to the local press criticism, the picture was objected to by the Burman Buddhists, the objection mainly being on the ground of Buddha being represented on the screen by a human being".

A. It might have been the information of the President.

Q. But you know that Buddha is acted in the shape of puppets?

A. Yes.

Q. At any rate you did not hear of that objection?

A. No.

Q. One more question I would put to you. Do you go to the western films?

A. Yes.

Q. Have you seen anything objectionable yourself at any time?

A. No.

Q. Do you think the western films have a tendency to demoralise the Burmans?

A. I think there is no difference between the present Burman and Western films at all.

Q. Burman films have no demoralising effect?

A. Well in the case of some it is so. Not on the average.

Q. How have they such an effect? In what respect?

A. I have been noting that recently. In recent years we had been hearing much about kidnapping cases (in court). In a picture it is shown that a young man falls in love with a young girl and they run away and it ends very happily. And in the case which came before the court, they might have gone and seen this picture and that might probably have been the reason for running away.

Q. Here girls marry only after they attain mature years?

A. Every one marries at the age of 18 or 19.

Q. But what I mean is, is it a case of self choice or is it a case of choice by parents here in Burma?

A. Among the respectable classes it is a case of choice by parents. Ordinarily among the lower classes of people self choice is the rule.

Q. It is not like us in India where our parents settle our marriages?

A. No.

Q. I suppose that women have got a certain amount of freedom in this country?

A. Yes, they have.

Q. I want to know whether you think there is any evil produced by the films which you think you should bring to the notice of this committee in order that that evil might be taken away.

A. I think there is only one objection. I was speaking to the Inspector of Police some time ago. In these films generally the actors wear all sorts of disguises. In the same way robbers disguise themselves as Chinamen, Indian gentlemen, etc., and commit robbery. The result is it cannot be found out whether he is a Chinaman or an Indian or a Burman.

Q. Is the Inspector of the opinion that it was due to the cinema?

A. He thinks it was due to that.

Q. Was there no disguise robbery before the cinema was here? Was not disguise known here before the introduction of the cinema?

A. It was known. But we were not having cases of disguise in large numbers till recently. Of course I mean good disguise.

Q. That is perhaps due to the market? By coming into contact with all sorts of people?

A. May be.

Q. Now people are coming in contact with all sorts of men, with the Indians, with the Chinamen and people of other nationalities, they know their dress and their habits. It might be due to that.

A. May be.

Q. Do you yourself think that there is any foundation for that, viz., that the cinema is responsible for thieves putting on disguise?

A. Yes, I think so. When I was at the Bar there were many theft cases. In those cases the gang of thieves generally employ young boys or children to commit theft and these children wear a very large coat or jacket and commit thefts. When they run away they will throw away these coats or pass them on to somebody. Probably such sorts of thefts they learned from the cinema. I mean to say the cinema has given them an opportunity to commit theft more cleverly.

Q. That is the only objection you have got against the Western films?

A. Yes.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: You have just said that you have seen Burmese pictures. Do you find any weak points in them with regard to photography or action?

A. Photography and action were originally bad. But now I think they are up to the mark.

Q. Have they come up to the Western level?

A. Not yet.

Q. Is the story well written?

A. The story, I think, they copy from the western films.

Q. What sort of help do you think Government could give to encourage the industry?

A. That is indeed a rather difficult question for me to answer.

Q. Does the Government give subsidies to these companies to improve themselves?

A. I think they ought to help them.

Q. Supposing they give loans, what security can these companies give?

A. I cannot say.

Q. Do you think that the Board of Censors here are sufficiently representative or do you want to reconstitute the Board?

A. I think it ought to have some more representatives from the educational side.

Q. Do you think that more ladies should be given representation on the Board?

A. Really it would be very good if more ladies were given representation.

Q. Regarding the film "Life of Buddha", was it prohibited or withdrawn by Madans?

A. I cannot say that.

Q. Are these Burman films popular with the Indians here?

A. Whenever I go to such cinemas I find very few Indians.

Q. The question is whether it is worth the while for producers or companies exhibiting such films to send such films to India to be shown there.

A. If it is of any historical importance it might be good. But ordinarily these love stories are not good to be sent out.

Mr. Neogy: I am told that in Burma you have a large number of criminal cases. Is it so?

A. I don't think so as far as ladies are concerned.

Q. Have you, as a public prosecutor, observed any increase in late years?

A. I cannot say there has been an increase but I think we have got cases where on account of the cinema they adopt certain methods.

Q. So, you say there have been improvements in the methods of committing crimes, which you think can be set down to the cinema. With regard to the kidnapping cases you mentioned, is it not a fact that kidnapping used to be prevalent in Burma even before the cinema came?

A. Not always so.

Q. But it was not altogether unknown?

A. Not altogether unknown. But the number is on the increase.

Q. We were told yesterday by a European witness that Western films had been influencing the dress of Burmese women?

A. No.

Q. You consider that it is a change not for the better?

A. No. The educated class use a sort of jacket now such as the Europeans wear and this sort of jacket, with a low neck, was altogether unknown in Burma before.

Q. Do you hold the cinema responsible for this?

A. No, I do not.

Chairman: You hold that by seeing more people and coming in contact with them they have become like that?

A. Yes.

Mr. Neogy: Do the stories come up to their taste?

A. All stories, as I told you before, are generally copied from the Western films.

Q. We find a great admixture of the supernatural element in the Burmese films?

A. Exactly, that is so. But they are very popular with the masses.

Q. Are they popular with the educated class too?

A. I should think so. As far as dressing and scenery are concerned they are very good to see. I myself appreciate them very much.

Colonel Crawford: You mentioned in your answers to the Chairman's questions that elopement had been introduced possibly by the cinema.

A. I did not say that it was introduced by the cinema. But I said that the number was on the increase on account of the cinema.

Q. That is the point I wanted to make clear.

A. Elopement used to occur, but the number has increased now. I consider this is due to the influence of the cinematograph.

Q. You have spoken of the crimes that have come into existence as the influence of the cinema. Do you think the morality here is affected by the Western films?

A. So far as the educated class is concerned it is not, but with persons if they have got any criminality in them.

Q. Not the criminal side of it. I mean the exaggerated love scenes shown in Western films. Do you approve of them?

A. Yes.

Q. You see no objection?

A. No Sir, I don't see anything wrong.

Written Statement of Mr. M. S. MERRIKIN, Commissioner of Police and President of the Burma Board of Film Censors, dated 6th January 1928.

1. I have been associated with the Burma Board of Cinematograph Censors for 3½ years—first, as Secretary, and later, as President of the Board.

2. Films exhibited in Rangoon fall into four distinct classes, namely,

(a) Films of Western manufacture,

(b) Films of Indian manufacture,

(c) Films of Burmese manufacture,

(d) Films of Chinese manufacture.

Separate halls exist for the exhibition of the different classes of films. The audiences at the halls where (a) class films are exhibited consist of Europeans, Anglo-Indians and educated Indians and Burmans—the latter forming about two-thirds of an average audience. Halls in which (b) class films are exhibited are patronised solely by Indians, most of whom are illiterate. Halls in which (c) class films are exhibited are patronised solely by Burmans and Chinese, including both the educated and the semi-educated classes.

(d) Class films are of recent importation. There is only one hall in which such films are exhibited and the audiences there mainly consist of Chinese. Children under 14 do not patronise the Cinema Halls.

3. Films depicting Indian mythology appear to be most popular with Indian audiences. Films of a sensational nature are particularly popular

with both Indian and Burman audiences. The producers of Burmese films obtain ideas and plots from films of western manufacture and adapt these to local conditions. They also adopt English fiction and construct Burmese historical films out of them, for example; Antony Hope's *Rupert of Hentzau*, was recently Burmanised and produced as a Burmese historical drama.

4. Exhibitors appear to be catering adequately for Indian and Burman audiences.

5.(a) Burmese films are of fair quality.

(b) They are very popular with Burmese audiences.

(c) Western films are more profitable to exhibitors than either Burmese or Indian films.

6. Local Indians complain of the poor quality of Indian produced films which are sent over to Burma.

7. No special class of films are imported for exhibition to British Troops. They visit the halls where films of Western manufacture are exhibited in fairly large numbers. The Indian Troops at present in Rangoon do not patronise the Cinemas.

9. Six of the ten Cinema Halls in Rangoon are at present owned by the Madan Theatres Company, Limited, and they contemplate acquiring more. It appears, therefore, that there is a tendency for this Company to obtain a monopoly of the exhibition of films. This Company, however, is endeavouring to encourage films of local manufacture by offering the producers special terms in connection with the exhibition of films in halls owned by the Company. I understand that in the halls where Burmese films are exhibited, the Company allow the producers to take 70 per cent. of the takings, whereas in the halls where Indian films are exhibited, the proprietors and the producers share the takings equally.

10. The system of blind booking only prevails so far as the importation of Chinese produced films is concerned.

11. The Madan Theatres Company, Ltd., arrange for all films imported by them to be previewed by their agents at the places of manufacture. As far as I know, other importers have no such arrangements.

12. There is no Amusement Tax in Burma.

13. I understand that, for purposes of levying Customs duty, all manufactured films are valued at four annas per foot, and that a 20 per cent. *ad valorem* duty is collected on this calculation. The importers inform me that this affects them adversely as they have to pay the same tax in proportion on films which are only suitable for short runs as they have to on films which are more popular with the public and which are therefore more valuable to the importers. I have no suggestion to make on this point as I do not think that it is possible for the Customs Authorities to assess the value of films at their drawing value.

14. I consider that an increased use of the cinema for educational purposes in schools and for adult education and Public Health, etc., would help the growth of the film industry in Burma, but I do not consider that there has yet arisen any public demand for such films. Some such films have drawn audiences.

15. Conditions in Burma are favourable to the development of a Burmese film producing industry on a large scale.

16. The Burmese film producing industry is still in its infancy, but, with experience, there should be a sufficient number of producers, directors, actors, actresses, etc., with sufficient technical knowledge, enterprise, resource and adaptability to produce a substantial output of films. Such films, however, are not likely to be of any real competitive value outside Burma.

17. There is sufficient capital in Burma to support film production sufficient for the demands of the Province.

18. It would possibly be desirable if Government instituted some agency whereby the plots and stories of proposed films might be censored before

money is expended in the production of such films. It would not be possible to insist that every plot or scenario should be submitted for censorship beforehand, but it would be a safeguard to producers if, in cases where they were doubtful whether a film would be accepted or not, they could submit their plots or scenarios to some censoring authority beforehand.

21. It is undesirable that a State agency should be created to undertake the management of the film industry as a monopoly.

22. India should participate in the policy of encouraging British empire films and such participation should (a) assist the development of her own film industry, (b) assist in making herself better understood throughout the Empire and (c) improve the standard of Western films shown in India.

23. This is a matter which can best be taken up by the Educational authorities under the various Governments.

24. (a) No.

(b) No.

(d) Yes.

(e) No.

25. The differences in social customs and the outlook between the West and the East must be a consideration with any censorship authority, but it is not possible to debar films which are otherwise unobjectionable simply because they contain scenes which do not conform to the customs of the country in which they are exhibited. For example, kissing in public is looked upon by Burmans as an indecent act, but, because of that, it would not be feasible to debar the exhibition in Burma of all films in which kissing scenes are depicted.

26. (a) Certainly, great care is necessary in censoring films likely to offend religious susceptibilities.

(b) A few years ago, a film depicting the life of Lord Buddha was produced in India and was passed by the Indian Boards of Censors. When, however, this film was brought over to Burma and exhibited in Rangoon, it aroused very great opposition generally amongst Burman Buddhists, and it was subsequently found necessary to prohibit the exhibition of this particular film in Burma.

27. (a) Burmans generally look down upon their own actors and actresses as being on a lower social scale, and they do not regard dramas and plays produced by them as being a true representation of their own normal life and customs. They look upon Western actors and actresses from the same standpoint and do not regard Western films as being a true representation of normal western life and customs.

(b) No.

28. No.

29. No, except in cases of films which are produced for educational purposes.

30. No.

31. Yes.

32. The present system of censorship in this Province has worked satisfactorily and no improvement on this system can be suggested.

33. An unduly strict censorship would certainly lead to the evils referred to. The main object of censorship should be to ban anything which might offend the moral or religious susceptibilities of an average audience. It should not attempt to cater for the super-moral person nor should it attempt to educate the taste of the Cinema-going public. If the public choose to pay money to go and see pictures which do not appeal to the educated mind, censorship should not interfere with the production and exhibition of such pictures unless they contain any matter of an objectionable nature.

34. It is considered that the replacement of the present Provincial Board by a single Central Board would interfere with the development of the local Burmese producing industry.

35. (a) The present constitution of the Burma Board of Censors is considered satisfactory and it is considered that the engagement of a whole-time paid Officer as Censor would not be an improvement on the present system.

36. (a) There have been instances in the past where films which had been passed by the paid Inspectors at Bombay and Calcutta have been taken exception to when these films were seen by Members of the Burma Board of Censors in Rangoon.

37. (a) The Act provides adequate safeguards for preventing the exhibition of a film which may be objectionable locally although it has been passed by an Indian Board.

38. Yes. Please see reply to Question 26 (b) above.

39. No. We receive no information as to films which are banned outside India.

40. Posters, handbills and advertisements of cinema performances should, certainly, be censored. It is suggested that all such posters, handbills and advertisements should be required to be produced before a sub-committee of the local Board of Censors before they are publicly exhibited. Several such advertisements have been found in Burma which were held to be objectionable in that they were suggestive that the films that they advertised were films of a censorious nature.

41. There has been a noticeable improvement during the last year.

42—43. No.

44. Public bodies and the press could possibly do something towards popularising films of a good standard and thereby educate the taste of the general public.

45. (a) There does not appear to be any particular object to be obtained by imposing Government control over film production other than censorship.

(b) In order, however, to keep a check on the exhibition outside Rangoon of locally produced films which have not been censored, it might be desirable to require that all film producing agencies should be registered and required to maintain a register of all films produced which should be open to inspection at any time by a responsible Officer.

Oral Evidence of the Burma Board of Film Censors, on Wednesday, the 18th January 1928.

The following Members of the Board attended:—

Mr. M. S. Merrikin, Commissioner of Police, Rangoon, President of the Burma Board of Censors (*Ex-officio*).

Mr. F. F. Wemyss, Assistant Commissioner of Police, Rangoon (*Ex-officio*), Secretary of Board.

Captain V. L. de Cordova, Military representative, Staff Captain of Rangoon Brigade Force.

Dr. Alan M. Murray, a professional Doctor, nominated by the Vigilance Society, Rangoon.

U. Po Tsee, A. T. M., Retired Extra Assistant Commissioner, nominated by the Local Government.

U. Sein, Editor, New Light of Burma Press, nominated by the Young Men's Buddhist Association, Rangoon.

Ma Pwa Hmee, Bar-at-Law, a lady lawyer, nominated by Local Government in place of educational representative, resigned.

Chairman: I am sorry to have given you this trouble, but you will help me as much as you can. You are the President of the Board?

Mr. Merrikin: Yes.

Q. That is *ex-officio*?

A. Yes.

Q. The Secretary is the Assistant Commissioner?

A. Yes.

Q. Ever since the Board of Censors was constituted this system has been in vogue?

A. Yes, it has been going on like that.

Q. The other Burman gentlemen are all non-officials?

A. Yes. The lady also is a non-official.

Q. How many non-officials have you?

A. Only two officials are on the Board. Captain Cordova is the Military representative and the rest are all non-officials.

Q. You have got one representative from the education side on your Board?

A. Yes.

Q. The lady represents the Education Department?

A. Yes.

Q. How do you represent the education department?

Ma Pwa Hmee: I am nominated by the Local Government in place of the educational representative resigned.

Q. I notice that the full Board meets only in case any doubt is entertained by the first committee which inspects the films.

Mr. Merrikin: The full Board now meets once a week, Sir, to allot work to the Sub-committee and to dispose of any work that comes up.

Q. Does the full Board meet once a week?

A. Yes. The Sub-committee first examines the film and then when there is any dissatisfaction about the decision an appeal is made to the full Board.

Q. I suppose that most of the films examined by the Board for certificate are either Burmese or Chinese films?

A. In recent years the majority of the films examined are Chinese and Burmese. Very few Western films, I mean films imported from the West, come up for certificate since most of them have already been certified either in Calcutta or in Bombay.

Q. You have got the figures to show the number of films examined and the footage? We would like to know how many of them are really Eastern and how many are Western and also the footage.

A. I have got figures for 1926-27. Of the films examined there were:

In 1926, 48 Burman films, 450,000 ft.

In 1927, 74 Burman films, 632,000 ft.

In 1926, Chinese films, 20 in number, 140,000 ft.

In 1927, Chinese films, 36 in number, 336,000 ft.

Western films in 1926, 36 in number, 160,000 ft.

Western films in 1927, 45 in number, 137,000 ft.

Q. The second thing I should like to know is, if you can possibly give that, the total footage exhibited in the cinemas in any one year.

A. We can find out that, but it means some considerable labour.

Q. We should like to know what footage is Eastern and what footage is Western in an annual exhibition and we shall be very much obliged if you can give us that.

A. Yes, I could get that figure for you.

Q. Thank you very much. You can send it to us later on. We want the total footage exhibited in the year and of which how much is Indian, Burman, Chinese and Western.

A. Yes.

Q. If possible also distinguish between British Empire and the Western films.

A. Yes, we can give that information too.

Q. Every film which is passed is inspected by at least 2 members of the Board in your province?

A. Yes.

Q. If it is not censored before it comes to Burma, it is inspected at least by 2 members of your Board?

A. Yes. The Sub-committee submits a report but the full Board has got power to reject their recommendations. It is a matter of practice that if the producers are not satisfied with the report of the Sub-committee they make an appeal to the full Board and then the full Board will go and see the film.

Q. We understood that you are going to inspect a film "The Wealthy Man's Daughter" to-morrow since it was not passed by your sub-committee?

A. Yes.

Q. The matter is still pending. It is therefore quite open to you to give such information only as you think fit at present. Can you tell us what the full Board has got to do now?

A. There are 14 parts in it altogether. The Sub-committee saw the first 6 parts and at that stage they were dissatisfied with the film and they considered it not worthwhile to sit through the rest. They recommended to reject it. The Manager made an appeal to me and asked the full Board to come and inspect the film.

Q. What is the report of the Sub-committee? Do you send the report to the producer?

A. Yes. I shall let you have it: (Reads) "The Wealthy Man's Daughter" This is a picture of a low moral tone and its crudity makes it more objectionable even than 'Circle the Enchantress'. We found it so disgusting that we stopped it in the middle".

Q. Two of the Censors inspected it?

A. Yes. This lady and a gentleman.

Q. The other was also a Burman gentleman?

A. No. It was Dr. Murray.

Q. Both of you agreed in making that note?

A. Yes.

Q. I see your Board is not self-supporting. You have to depend upon Government contribution?

A. Yes, we have to depend upon the Government.

Q. I find you have been getting grants almost every year?

A. Yes.

Q. You get grants from the Education department?

A. Yes, I think they must come from that department.

Colonel Crawford: Not from the budget of the Rangoon town Police? That was the case in 1920 I think?

A. We get a grant for the purpose yearly, which is included in our budget.

Mr. Green: You seem to get something like Rs. 4,500 a year?

A. I have got a note here saying that Government have had to contribute a sum of about Rs. 33,000 during the last six years. That is a report published in January 1927.

Chairman: Was there any attempt at introducing the amusement tax in your provinces?

A. No, I do not think it has been attempted.

Q. I suppose as a board you expect, in the matter of censoring the Burmese productions, to come into touch with the producers here?

A. The Members of the Board of Censors do not come into close touch with the Burmese producers, except in-so-far-as they see and censor the films after they have been produced.

Q. How long have Burmese films been produced?

A. I think I can give the figures now. In 1924 Burmese films began to come in, in 1925 there were 48 Burmese films, in 1926, 57 and in 1927, 74.

Q. There are 15 studios here?

A. There are 16 of them, and of those four are big shows.

Q. Can you tell us how many films the big shows produce every year?

A. I am afraid I cannot tell you that off-hand. I can get the figures later for you.

Q. How many films and what footage are produced by each of these big concerns. That is the information we want?

A. Yes, I shall send it.

Q. The others produce only occasionally I suppose?

A. Yes.

Q. They indulge in topicals or do they take to stories, etc.?

A. They mostly go in for Burmese historical films.

Q. Have you at any time ascertained what the cost of production is to the people in Burma?

A. Roughly, it will be Rs. 10,000 for 10,000 ft., or a rupee a foot.

Q. You mean for the entertainment films?

A. Yes.

Mr. Green: That covers the overhead charges?

A. I take it it covers everything.

Chairman: In these four big studios, do they keep a regular establishment of actors and actresses?

A. I am afraid I do not know very much as to how they do their business.

Q. Are the actresses who appear for the production of the films fairly good, i.e., are they coming from a good class of people? In India we were told there was no difficulty about that?

A. I do not think there is any trouble here about that. The Burmans are naturally good actors.

Q. To Ma Pwa Hmee: Is that your view also? You think fairly good family people are likely to take to this profession?

Ma Pwa Hmee: I think we can have such people in large numbers.

Q. I notice that for censoring Burmese films you generally depute Burmese gentlemen?

Mr. Merrikin: Yes, usually.

Q. You consider they will be the best judges of what is good for them?

A. Yes, most of these films are in Burmese.

Q. Have you had at any time to reject any Burmese film altogether?

A. We have not rejected anything wholly. Here and there we have made cuts in certain cases but have never rejected a whole film.

Q. You think that the Burmese film industry has a good future in this country?

A. I think it has.

Q. They are deficient in certain respects, you must have noticed. What do you think is the remedy, for improving the acting, direction, etc.?

A. I think it is a matter of gaining experience. If some of the producers go to England or some other place and get new ideas I think there will be improvement.

Q. That leads me on to another question. Do you think they can themselves do that or do you think that Government should give scholarships?

A. I think it is not a matter for Government interference. They might encourage it by giving prizes for good productions and possibly scholarships.

Q. That is what I was suggesting. Especially having regard to the defects in the production, it may be a good thing to send some of the people who are already employed in the industry abroad, to pick up some knowledge, and some scholarships may be given to them?

A. I agree to that.

Q. Anyway, you think it is a good thing for the country that Burmese films should develop in great numbers?

A. Oh yes, certainly.

Q. Rather than encourage the western films coming into vogue here and denationalising the people or giving new notions to them?

A. I would not say that western films are denationalising the people. They are only giving new notions and ideas.

Q. As a board, I suppose you are agreed that the films now shown have a tendency more for good than for evil?

A. Yes, that is the general opinion.

Q. And such evil as there is, you consider is inevitable in the film trade?

A. I should say it is so.

Q. Being more for amusement purposes than for educational instruction?

A. That is my idea.

Q. You think that the censorship here is fairly adequate?

A. I think that it is so.

Q. Of course there must be some lapses here and there but on the whole you are satisfied?

A. On the whole I am satisfied that the censorship is adequate.

Q. That is the opinion of the whole board, I think?

A. Yes.

Q. May I also take it that having regard to the large number of films which are imported into the country and which have to be produced, you are satisfied with the average moral tone of the pictures?

A. Yes. We are satisfied with that.

Q. But some of them may be foolish or stupid?

A. Yes. We have seen a large number of pictures which do not appeal to the cultured mind, but there was nothing in them to call either immoral or demoralising.

Q. You, Mr. President of the Board, have sent us a memorandum. Was it considered by the Board or is it your individual opinion?

A. It was written by myself and placed before the Board who generally agreed with what I have written.

Q. Have you come across many cases of indecent posters and advertisements to which you would take exception?

A. I have seen some in the past, but latterly I have not seen anything to which I would take objection. There was a Social Hygiene Delegation which came here and a Member of that Delegation went out confidentially and collected about two dozen pictures, which Mrs. C. Neville Rolfe showed me.

Q. Were they posters or hand-bills?

A. Posters and hand-bills.

Q. Big pictures?

A. Some of them small and some fairly big.

Q. She did not show any of those animated pictures, 24 ft. long?

A: No; they were small pictures and some of them were hand-bills, in all about two dozen.

Q: She says that she handed them over to some educationist here, who wants to remain anonymous?

A: I do not know.

Q: I wanted to know what happened to them, but she wrote back to say that she got them from a gentleman who wanted to remain anonymous and then handed them back to him. We might perhaps trace it in Mandalay, I think. Have you seen the report of the Social Hygiene Delegation, especially paragraphs 1, 3 and 9 and 10? You may read the whole of those paragraphs now. (After a pause). Did that Delegation discuss the effect of the cinema either with you or with any of the members of your board?

A: Mrs. Neville Rolfe met me in connection with the hand-bills.

Q: Not with regard to the effect of the film in the country?

A: No; she told me in person that the films were demoralising to the youth of the country.

Q: She did not try to gather your opinion or the opinions of the members of your board on that matter?

A: Mrs. Neville Rolfe discussed a good many subjects with me but I do not remember her particularly discussing the Cinema censorship question beyond drawing my attention to certain undesirable advertisements of films that she had collected. As far as I recollect, I did tell her it was my opinion that our system of censorship was satisfactory.

Q: In paragraph 1 you notice she says: "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". Do you agree with that?

A: I do not agree with that.

Q: Does any member of the board agree with that view?

A: No.

Q: Then again she says: "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". Did any of you ever hear of any such case?

Dr. Murray: We never get any information, Sir, of what happens either in England or in the country of origin. There are of course some films which some of us would rather have altered, but we do not know what was done in the country of origin.

Q: That is not the point. She says: "Which had been rejected by large cities in England but were or had recently been in circulation in India and Burma"?

Mr. Merrikin: I know of no such thing in Burma and no member here has heard of any such thing. We don't get any official information about films which are banned outside India.

Q: We have hitherto been unsuccessful in tracing the place where she got that information. But, then again she proceeds: "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". I suppose some of you are familiar with Great Britain. Do you think there is much difference between the standard of western films and Indian films?

A: I have never seen films in England.

Q: Do you agree with that statement?

Captain Cordova: There is no difference, I think.

Q: At any rate, none of you gave them any authority for such impressions?

Mr. Merrikin: Those impressions were certainly not got from me.

Q: Did any of the other members of the board meet the lady or the delegation or have any conversation with them about the cinema?

A: No, none of us.

Q: Do you think from your experience it will cause any great inconvenience to the trade if the producers are compelled to show the posters and advertisement matter to the censors?

A: I do not see how it can be any great inconvenience to the trade.

Q: So far as hand-bills are concerned, they may be printing as they go on or they may have to increase the number or alter the language when they go to other parts of the country?

A: I do not think it will be feasible to have posters and advertisements passed by the board of censors; it may perhaps be better to have them produced before the Secretary of the Board for getting passed.

Q: Before introducing any such procedure, one should gather whether there is any necessity for it. Has the trade behaved so badly so far that it must be put under that restriction?

A: I do not think there is any very great complaint with regard to that. There have not been any posters which we could call obscene; only they might have been undesirable. I think it would conduce to greater efficiency if the Act was amended so as to enable the censors to withdraw any notice that might have been issued and to inflict a penalty in case they disobeyed the order.

Q: Of course if the evil is really so much that the board of censors should do it, then the trade is bound to obey; but the question is whether as the people dealing with this business, you think the evil is really large?

A: The evil is not quite so great as to call for any strict censorship. I think the board should have power to order the removal or withdrawal of posters.

Q: Although it will not come under the Penal Code, you think it must have some power to the police or the magistracy, not necessarily to the board. You think perhaps that some additional power to the police would do?

A: I think that would be sufficient in the first place.

Q: Do you think the cinema is a paying concern to the exhibitors? I fear they are changing hands very frequently; that is why I put you the question?

A: The Madan Theatres, Ltd., is a paying concern I think. The Burman cinemas also are paying.

Q: What is the Chinese population in the town?

A: I am afraid I cannot say. I think the figures can be collected from the census report.

Q: I think the cinemas here have to cater to four communities, the Anglo-Indian, the European, the Indian and the Chinese or Burmans?

A: Yes.

Q: From your knowledge, do you think the uneducated or illiterate classes frequent the western shows?

A: Not to a very great extent.

Q: So that the western films can have any influence if at all, only on the European, Anglo-Indian or the educated Indian or Burman?

A: Yes.

Q: So that there need not be any apprehension so far as the western films are concerned that they will have any effect on the un-educated classes, because they do not generally frequent them?

A: They do not frequent them to any great extent.

Q. You seem to think that every locally produced film should be subjected to some examination before exhibition either abroad or at home? Is that your idea?

A. My idea is that there is no safeguard now that uncensored films are not exhibited in the country outside Rangoon.

Q. That is a serious question. Do you think that uncensored films are being exhibited everywhere?

A. I have no definite information on the subject. I only say that there is no real check at present.

Q. But of course they will be liable to prosecution if they exhibit uncensored films?

A. Yes, if they are caught.

Q. I suppose every film carries with it a trailer showing by whom it was certified, the number and all that. It has been suggested that the exhibitor should also be in possession of the original certificate or the duplicates thereof in readiness for production to the members of the board. Do you approve of such a course?

A. I think that is reasonable.

Q. Then you may have to issue certificates perhaps in duplicates and triplicates because the same man may be showing the pictures in different places?

A. No, one certificate is quite enough I think.

Q. Supposing the film is being shown both here and in Mandalay at the same time, where is the man to have the original certificate, if he is liable to produce it at any place?

A. It is necessary to get a separate certificate for each copy of a film that has been censored—Our local Rule 22 reads—

"In the case of a film which is a copy of one for which a certificate has previously been issued under this Act to another applicant the Committee may at its discretion dispense with examination in which case a certificate may issue forthwith . . ."

Q. So that each duplicate carries a certificate?

A. Yes.

Q. So, such a rule would not be a hardship. Wherever he takes a copy, he has got to keep a certificate?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you think it would be better to see whether it has been interfered with?

A. I do not think you can tell the length of the film by merely looking at it.

Q. And you would not be able to detect whether the film has been tampered with, by merely looking at it?

A. No.

Q. So your opinion is that no practical use would follow by insisting on seeing the certificate so long as there is a trailer showing by whom the certificate was issued?

A. I think that is sufficient.

Q. I think the censorship board here is attached to the Education department. In other provinces they are attached to the Home department, and in one province to the Law department. Has it been attached to the Education department here all along?

A. I think we were originally in the Political department, but after the Reforms came in, we were transferred to the Education department.

Q. Is it necessary that the Commissioner of Police should be the President of the censorship board? Is it not enough if the Commissioner of Police is a member of the board and not necessarily its president?

A. There is no necessity as to why he should be the president.

Q. Of course his presence on the board as a Commissioner of Police may be useful for giving advice. Especially when you are over-worked already with your ordinary duties, don't you think there is no necessity for you to be the President?

A. I am afraid there is not very much work falling on me. It is the Secretary who does all the spade work.

Q. But certain people take objection to that on the score that this is more the work of a public censor, that it is more a matter for the public than for the police?

A. I do not see that objection.

Q. So you don't think there is any necessity that he should be connected with the board?

A. There is no necessity why we should have any connection with it at all, except perhaps as a matter of convenience.

Q. Do you think the private producers here have access to places of public resort?

A. I think they have free access anywhere.

Q. Is there any difficulty being felt by them?

A. I have not heard of any difficulty felt by them.

Q. Has the board or any member of the board come across any case of films produced in this country and exhibited abroad which depicted the Burman or Indian in any shady character?

A. I have not heard of any such films.

Q. None of you?

A. None.

Q. What do you do in cases where the western films depict the Chinamen in a questionable character? Do you take exception to any captions or any offensive titles? You have got a large Chinese population here?

A. I do not remember having come across any such case.

Q. They choose the Chinaman or the Burman for such characters and they have not raised any comment in Burma?

A. No.

Colonel Crawford: In your answers to the Chairman you spoke of a promising future for the film producing industry in Burma?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you think the Burman market is large enough to give them much scope for improvement.

A. I think there is demand for pictures in Burma itself.

Q. What is the total number of houses?

A. I am collecting the information. I think the number is 65 houses outside Rangoon and 15 or 17 in Rangoon.

Q. The Burmans are definitely fond of entertainment?

A. Yes; definitely.

Q. Do you know the cost of production of a Burmese film.

A. I think it is one rupee a foot.

Q. Well now a witness yesterday told us that the educated Burman was getting tired of the Burman picture owing to the lack of quality. We are inclined to believe that improvement in quality must necessitate considerable increase in expenditure and that the moment there is increase in expenditure it is difficult to get your money back unless you have a number of theatres in which to exhibit them?

A. From that point of view Burma does not offer sufficient exhibition grounds for the producer if he does spend a large amount on his pictures to cater for the more highly educated Burman.

Q. So there is something in that suggestion that the more educated the Burman is, he is likely to get tired of the existing production unless they are improved?

A. I think there is a lot in that.

Q. Would I be correct in stating that this would necessitate increased expenditure in production?

A. That is correct. I am stuck on that point. I don't know how you are going to get out of it.

Q. It is also suggested to us that if you can provide the Burman with good entertainment in the nature of cinema pictures it may help to curtail crime in villages. Is there anything in that suggestion?

A. The Burman has little to occupy his time and I think these pictures will have a tendency to decrease crime.

Q. I understand you are getting your pictures from different quarters, from the West, China, Burma and India. There is also the question of the moral point of view other than to what I may call local provincial requirements. Are you satisfied with the censorship so far as the moral tone of Western films are concerned which is largely done by Boards in India?

A. Yes.

Q. I notice what you say against the Central Board. Subject to certain provisos that you may like as regards your local requirements you have no objection to the Central Board censoring these?

A. I see no objection.

Q. Obviously they will have to meet the requirements of the trade. The Central Board will have to pass its films at ports of entry, one of which might be Rangoon if there is a great import in Rangoon?

A. Yes.

Q. In addition to that you must have a provincial Board.

A. Yes.

Q. You have another point to take into consideration, that you import Chinese films here direct, and you have to do the censoring work here.

A. Yes.

Q. Do you approve of stipendiary censors?

A. I am in favour of retaining our present system. We pay our members of the Board Rs. 20 for attending the weekly meetings, i.e., we pay each member Rs. 80 a month for doing the censoring work. This is not intended to remunerate them for the work they do but serves as expenses for travelling to the office and to the Cinema halls.

Q. You prefer censorship by unpaid censors?

A. I certainly do. I have no experience of paid censors.

Q. According to the English system we have part-time officers to do this work. They are paid £1,000 a year. Do you not think, if you get a man with the requisite qualifications to do the work as a full time censor it is a better method on the whole than asking public assistance to do the work.

A. In theory it appears to be a better system. One censor, however, would not be sufficient to deal with the different types of films which come up for censorship here, and it would be an expensive proposition to pay two or more full-time censors with the requisite qualifications. On these grounds, I think the proposal is impracticable so far as Burma is concerned.

Q. Can you at present get men to do the censoring work free?

A. We have no difficulty about it.

Q. Your work is not too heavy now?

A. No.

Chairman: In other provinces they have 34 hours work each day of the week.

A. We have not got that much to do here.

Colonel Crawford: As regards the constitution of the Board I notice you are censoring Chinese films.

A. Yes.

Q. Have you a Chinaman on the Board?

A. We have no Chinaman on it.

Q. Has there been any suggestion to include one?

A. The necessity for a Chinese censor has not yet arisen and hitherto the censoring of Chinese films has been satisfactorily done by the ordinary Members of the Board. There was a case the other day in which a film contained a considerable amount of letter-press in Chinese, and, as the Sub-Committee were doubtful as to whether the letter-press contained any undesirable matter, I sent my Chinese Interpreter to see the film and report.

Q. With the present composition of your Board you are satisfied?

A. It is fairly satisfactory. I think we require an Indian on the Board.

Q. Do you censor many Indian films?

A. We censor all Indian films although they have been censored in India.

Chairman: What is the object?

A. This was started some two or three years ago by my predecessor. I think that it was due to the communal disturbances in India—both the Hindu and Mohamedan Communities in Rangoon were at the time somewhat nervous of the disturbances spreading here and they were both distrustful of each other. A film did come through here, so I am told, and was objected to by some Members of one of the two Communities. In order to avoid anything which might stir up ill-feeling between the two Communities here, my predecessor took special precautions and ordered that all Indian films should be re-censored before being shown here, and this practice has continued up-to-date.

Q. Under what power was that done?

A. Our local rule 4 gives us this power. It reads: "The Board may appoint special censors not being Members of the Board to examine films on which it is advisable to obtain the views of the community concerned."

Colonel Crawford: There is no charge made for re-examining a certified film?

A. No.

Q. On the question of finance I notice that your receipts were largely received from examination fees and partly from licensing cinema houses in Burma. Is that source of revenue allotted for the purpose of Cinema administration?

A. Yes. They are credited to the Cinema fund.

Q. That is rather interesting. Now, in your answer to question No. 25, you refer to kissing in public. Do you consider the kissing scenes in western films are entirely suitable?

A. I do not see how they can be objected to. There is nothing suggestive in it.

Chairman: It all depends on the man.

Colonel Crawford: Do you think any action is necessary to guard close-ups?

A. I do not think you can do that in a general sort of way.

Q. In western films, you think there is nothing objectionable?

A. Not generally.

Q. I see you are very strong on the point of wounding the religious susceptibilities. The film trade has already so many limitations—one province will not allow the film of another province, as it would offend a particular community. Do not these limitations seriously hamper the development of the trade?

A. I do not think so.

Q. You were referring to the existing Hindu and Muhammadan tension?

A. I was referring to the particular film, "The Life of Lord Buddha."

Chairman: On what grounds was it objected to?

A. The grounds were rather vague. The main reason was they did not like a man taking the part of Buddha in a film publicly exhibited.

Q. What was the objection, do you Burman members know?

A. (By a Burman Member.) The figures were not exactly true according to the Burmese scriptures and other scenes also. The story also was not in accordance with the Buddhist scriptures.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: There was a disagreement with the members of your committee.

Mr. Merrikin: This film was first censored by two Burman censors and, being passed by them, was certified. It immediately attracted large houses, but, after it had been shown for two or three days, objections began to come in from all quarters of the Burmese community. The exhibition of the film was suspended, and my Predecessor made arrangements for the film to be viewed by a fully representative body of Burmans who were unanimous in condemning it as undesirable and harmful to their religious susceptibilities.

Q. Was it withdrawn by Madans?

A. We suspended the film under the Act and so it was withdrawn.

Q. Madans say that they withdrew it?

A. I think it was in accordance with our orders.

Q. Did you see the film yourself?

A. (A Burman Member.) I passed it along with another gentleman, a Burman.

Q. Then what was the objection?

A. The point was that certain meetings presided over by Maung Thin considered the film low and the pictures did not coincide with Edwin Arnold's book. The film had been produced according to the Indian taste. I say, it must be according to the Burman idea. If this were done we would have no objection. I tell you honestly this was done out of sheer jealousy. For three or four nights this was shown in the Excelsior theatre. The neighbouring houses were all empty. The objection, I should say, was based on jealousy.

Chairman: You really think there was no objection in it.

A. Not at all.

Q. We heard it said by the Public Prosecutor that one of the objections raised was that Buddha was shown with a small number of disciples whereas he had a large number of them?

A. May I ask whether he is a Burman Prosecutor. That is the question. You must ask a Burman about it.

Colonel Crawford: Do you think there is any necessity for a Central appellate authority for India to which the trade can appeal against the local board of censors?

Mr. Merrikin: I think it would be a safeguard to the trade certainly.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: The Church Missionary Society considered that the Bombay Presidency Censor Board's work was very satisfactory. Do you agree to this? Or do you still hold the view of your predecessor Colonel Macdonald?

A. I consider that the censorship of films by Indian Boards is satisfactory.

Colonel Crawford: What is the number rejected by your Board?

A. Since 1920 we have rejected 16 films passed in India, 8 Bombay and 8 Bengal out of a total number of several thousand. Strictly there is not much of a difference of opinion.

Q. In view of that statement you have no objection to films on the moral side including the three films which were banned entirely on religious grounds, on account of Buddhism?

A. No.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: Of course you have read the report of the National Council of Women in Burma?

A. I saw their report.

Q. They examined here in Burma several people and they sent their questionnaire also to several of them. Do you agree with what they have stated in their report?

A. I do not agree with the report as a whole, and consider that the report is misleading. They quoted a portion of my replies only and so conveyed an entirely wrong idea as to the views I actually expressed on the whole question.

Q. May I have a copy of the proceedings of your Board held last week?

A. I can get you one.

Q. You examined 104 films last year.

A. I think we examined 155 and 133 of them were passed by us. 104, that is the number on 1st October of the year I think.

Q. And the Bombay Board examined more than 500 or 600. I understand they are self-supporting, I mean the Bombay Board. What is the reason that your board is not self-supporting?

A. We do not get a sufficient number of films.

Q. You say the members are paid Rs. 20 per meeting. Is it for merely coming and going? I am not criticising the work of your board.

A. The fees paid to the censors are intended to recompense them for their travelling expenses in attending the weekly meetings and visiting cinema halls to examine films. The members are not paid any separate fee for any actual censorship work. Previously, each member was paid Rs. 30 for attending a meeting, but this was reduced to Rs. 20 some years ago—the reason for the reduction was that Government wished to reduce the cost of the Board which was then non-supporting. I think that when the Board was first constituted, Government thought that it would be self-supporting, and when they found it was not so, they decided that the fees they had originally fixed, were on too liberal a scale.

Q. Still the cost is heavy, is it not?

A. It is not too heavy compared with the work done.

Q. Do you agree that the rate should be reduced?

A. I don't think you would be able to obtain the services of private ladies and gentlemen who would do the work for a smaller remuneration.

Q. It is said that many people will come forward to do the work honorarily. What is your opinion?

A. Of course people will say that they will do the work for nothing. They may attend a meeting or two and then they will stop away having something else to do.

Q. Do you agree to increase the number of members of the Board to 20 as the Burma National Council of Women has recommended?

A. I don't see any reason why we should increase the number.

Q. There ought to be more ladies probably, or some other special representations may have to be made?

A. I don't think there is any need to increase the existing number.

Q. Don't you think there ought to be a Hindu and a Mohammadan on the Board of Film Censors?

A. I agree to the suggestion that there should be a Hindu and a Mohammadan on the Board.

Q. Any film that you pass or reject do you inform the District Magistrates in the Province?

A. We inform the Local Government in the Education Department and they publish the same as a Gazette Notification.

Q. You also inform other provincial Boards, I suppose?

A. A copy of the Gazette notification is sent to all provincial Boards, in India, also.

Q. Have you come across any stolen films in Burma? I think Madans complained some time ago in Calcutta that copies of films said to have been stolen were shown in Rangoon?

A. We have heard of some rumours like that about 5 years ago. We have not heard of any such complaint recently.

Q. You were going to show me some proceedings of the Committee held last week

A. I am afraid, I have not got it with me now.

Q. When you reject any film do you hear any representations from the importers?

A. Of course, the importers make their representations. They have also a right of appeal to the Local Government against our decision.

Q. A Chinese gentleman complained to us that his film was unduly delayed?

A. I think he was given a copy of the Certificate. The censors make their remarks, copy of which is given to the importer or importers.

Q. In the list which you have furnished us no reasons have been given why those films were rejected?

A. I can look and give you the reasons, if necessary. In refusing films, reasons are always given and published.

Q. The Bombay Board of Film Censors meet only once in a fortnight or a month. Don't you think, if there is not much work to do, it would be better for you to meet every fortnight or a month? I only make this suggestion with a view to save money if it could be done.

A. There is sufficient work to justify the local Board meeting once a week. Applications for censorship of films are received almost every week and it would cause great inconvenience if the Board only met once a fortnight or once monthly.

Chairman: It is all matter of detail. I don't think we need enter into those things. The members of the Board may like to discuss the relative merits of the pictures they have seen.

Colonel Crawford: Do the members of your Board visit cinemas?

A. One cinema is supposed to be inspected once a month at least by a member.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: When are the members of your Board nominated? I think they don't change every year?

A. There is no fixed period during which a member could function on the Board. The lady member was nominated last year.

Ma Pwa Hmee: I got it in the place of a deceased member.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: When a man dies another gets his place, I suppose?

A. I don't think we could say like that. For example, Dr. Murray has been nominated by the Vigilance Society.

Q. I suppose Government makes the appointment on the recommendations of private bodies?

A. Yes. There are no fixed periods during which a member could continue to function on the Board. They generally continue to be members on the Board so long as they satisfy the requirements of the Board.

Q. Are there travelling cinemas in Burma?

A. Yes, there are.

Q. How many are there in Rangoon?

A. We have not got definite information at present.

Q. How many officials are there on the Board at present?

A. There are only two officials including myself (Chairman of the Board).

Q. I have heard it said that in India British troops are afforded some special facilities by the Y. M. C. A. for seeing cinemas. Are the Indian troops afforded any special facilities for viewing pictures in Burma?

A. There is no such practice in Burma.

Q. In answer to question 18 you have suggested that it would possibly be desirable to censor Government films, through some agency. Why should not the present Board of Censors do the work?

A. Yes, the present Board of Censors would be a suitable agency.

Q. Have you ever informed the Government that it is a good thing to do and ought to be done?

A. We have not sent any separate memorandum to the Government on this subject, except the written answers which is now before you.

Mr. Green: I want first to ask you whether there is any need to examine every film even if it has already been examined and certified in India?

A. It is only the Indian films that we re-censor here and not the Western films once certified in India. As a matter of fact the National Council of Women, Burma, wanted us to re-censor every film coming into Burma.

Q. May I take it that except when you feel very strongly on general moral grounds, you don't generally recommend the suspension of an Indian certificate?

A. Yes, that is right.

Q. So, the difference of opinion, if at all, will be because of purely local differences?

A. Yes.

Q. You don't think that the moral standard set up by Indian Boards is low?

A. No, certainly not.

Q. You have made a suggestion that it is better to censor the scenario before the film is produced?

A. When I made this suggestion I had in my mind two films, namely "The Life of Lord Buddha" (to which a reference has been made) and another locally-produced film which depicted the trial of a notorious outlaw and murderer. My point is that had the producers of either film been able to ascertain beforehand that the subject of the film would not be likely to be passed for exhibition, they would have been able to save themselves considerable expense and trouble.

Q. A similar thing happened in Bombay too. It has been represented to us, by many importers in particular, that it is grossly unfair that second-hand foreign films should pay exactly the same duty foot per foot as expensive first-hand productions. I see you point out that it is difficult to charge duty according to the ~~dramatic value~~ ^{value} of a film is its box office value? I suppose what you mean is that the real value of a film is its box office value?

A. Yes, quite.

Q. It has also been suggested to us that it is a good thing to have a high specific duty so that it will encourage the importation of good films rather than bad ones?

A. Yes, I think there is something in that.

Q. I was also very interested to note your particularly illuminating answer to question 27. We have heard a good deal about the demoralising effect of films and you point out that in Burma, at any rate, it is very well realised that it is a question of dramatic show and it is not real life. I think the Burmans are interested in the dramatic stage?

A. Yes, certainly they are.

Q. Have you ever served in India?

A. No, I have not.

Q. At any rate if that holds good in Burma it is likely to hold good in other parts of the world also?

A. I think so.

Q. You are also strong on the ground that censorship can hardly be aesthetic. It has been suggested that besides having the present negative censorship we should try to persuade censors to classify films according to either the aesthetic, educational or artistic value of the picture. Do you think it possible to make any such classification?

A. I don't think it is.

Q. Do you think it should be left to public opinion?

A. Yes.

Q. You don't think it will be possible to indicate that some certified films may be particularly suitable for children?

A. I don't think it is possible to say so. The Board might indicate that but I don't think it comes within the proper function of any Board of Censors.

Chairman: As a practical matter you agree that such artistic films could be classified?

A. Yes, I think it would be possible.

Q. Perhaps it would be more difficult than the present censorship?

A. Yes.

Mr. Neogy: Apart from the artistic nature the moral tone is also taken into consideration?

A. Yes. Moral tone as well as crudity.

Chairman: You mean crudity in getting these titles in English?

A. Yes.

Mr. Green: May it not be rather difficult for the trade if your objections cannot be stated more definitely than that a film is of low moral tone?

A. Yes. I agree that in the interests of the trade a Board should be more definite on that.

Q. Have you any definite standards laid down?

A. I am afraid we have not. Some years ago in Bombay I think they laid down certain principles. But they are rather indefinite.

Q. I think Bombay starts by saying "No hard-and-fast rules are rigidly applicable".

A. That is what we have felt. You cannot lay down anything except on very general and broad lines.

Q. I think you had already been asked about the possibility of a central board?

A. Yes.

Mr. Neogy: I suppose this note sent by the President represents his own views? Will the views of the other members be placed before us to-morrow?

A. The members are in general agreement with the views expressed there in. It has been circulated to the members and they generally agree with the views I have expressed.

Q. When you reject a film outright do you give any detailed reasons for your action to the exhibitor so that it might serve as a guide to him?

A. Yes. Indeed we do that. When the film is first examined by the sub-committee and their report is submitted the Board sends a copy of that report to the producers. The usual practice is if the exhibitors after seeing the report make an appeal to the full Board, then the full board go and see

the film. If they are not satisfied even with the decision of the full Board then they appeal to the Local Government, giving full reasons.

Q. Do you adopt any stricter standard of censorship in regard to the non western films? Say, Chinese, Burmese or Indian films? For example, in regard to the moral standards?

A. No. We are particularly on the look out for Indian films which may hurt religious susceptibilities.

Q. I don't know whether the Board had any opportunity of seeing "The Merry Widow"?

A. "The Merry Widow" was shown here.

Dr. Murray: I personally saw it and commented on it, at a Board meeting.

Q. What was the result?

Mr. Merrikin: I think the feeling at that moment was, if I remember right, that the incident that was referred to, if completely cut out, the film would be ruined. But as it had already practically run for several days in Rangoon it would inflict a serious hardship on the producer to step in at that moment and cut out what was really an important portion of the film.

Q. Your objection was only to an individual scene rather than to the entire tone?

A. Yes. A particular portion was objected to.

Mr. Green: You mean cutting out from the film that has been certified elsewhere? Under what provision of law has that been done?

A. Ordinarily, a film is passed for exhibition in Burma on the certificate of an Indian Board, but if such film, after it has been exhibited, excites adverse comment locally, the local Board has powers under our rules to view the film and to reject it entirely or cut out any objectionable portions.

Q. Do you retain such powers?

A. Yes, indeed.

Q. Supposing a film is passed in Bombay, say, 6,000 feet long, and it is sent out. And you cut out a hundred feet from that certified film and when it goes back it is only 5,900 feet long?

A. Yes.

Colonel Crawford: Do you issue a fresh certificate?

A. Yes.

Chairman: Have you had to do so several times or only once?

A. It is only very occasionally we do it.

Mr. Green: The same problem has arisen on the part of India also.

Mr. Neogy: I should like to know whether you have come across any instance in which you thought that a Burmese film tried to copy certain aspects of the Western films generally, making it untrue to the Burmese life. I think you understand what I mean.

Chairman: What he means by certain aspects is kissing, embracing, and all that in order to make the subject more sensational.

A. I think they do that. These alterations, rather these adaptations are made to suit the local interest.

Q. Do not these things make them more unnatural so far as Burman films are concerned?

A. I cannot say that.

Mr. Neogy: Because we were told yesterday by a gentleman that there is a tendency like that, and it has to be guarded against very carefully, so that the Burmese standards may not be defiled.

A. Certainly, I cannot say that there is anything bad. I take it that you mean the introducing of American and Western sensational thrills into Burman films, or kissing on the stage.

Q. On the whole the Burman is not much dissatisfied with the standard of pictures that are produced?

A. No.

Q. Suppose there was any misrepresentation of Burmese life in any of the Burmese pictures, would the Board of Censors object to the misrepresentation?

A. I cannot answer that question. It is very complicated.

Q. Suppose we were to have a sort of quota system, by which films produced in India and Burma for exhibition should be exhibited compulsorily in every picture house. Would we have merely the Burmese films to constitute the quota in Burma or Indian films also would come in for a share?

A. I think you have to cater here for different kinds of public as I have said in my note. Generally films of Indian manufacture attract only Indian audiences, of Burmese manufacture only Burman audiences, and of Chinese manufacture only Chinamen. If you have a quota you will have to cater for all these.

Q. A suggestion has been made that in order to encourage the production of films, every cinema theatre should be compelled to show a proportion of the Indian manufactured films. Supposing that policy were to be adopted, would you confine the quota for Burma to the Burmese pictures alone?

A. No, certainly not.

Q. Will you give a share to the Indian pictures too?

A. Yes, certainly.

Chairman: If any of the members of the Board wants to add anything here individually we shall be glad to hear them. Anybody who wants to express anything before this committee so that action might be taken?

Dr. Murray: There is one point I want to bring to the notice of this committee. Very often amongst some of the Western films that come up here, a film which might otherwise be an exceedingly good one is deemed, by reason of a scene here or there in the acting, not desirable. It would be exceedingly difficult to cut out that scene without spoiling the whole play. That sort of thing, if dealt with at the source of origin, might have been easily altered to make it entirely unobjectionable.

Chairman: They are produced in foreign countries and we cannot do anything in the matter.

A. This particular film that is referred to was an incident which was objected to in other parts of the world where a man attempts to take away a girl, goes into the next room and they change dresses. That is one. That sort of thing, if dealt with at the source of origin, might have been produced it is in the room, I mean Mr. Madan's representative is here, and I feel I can speak very freely in his presence. I refer to (1) The Queen of Sheba. It contained quite a number of scenes of seductions and so on, the Queen of Sheba coming into Solomon's room that night, etc.

Colonel Crawford: Was it true to the Biblical story?

A. No. There is absolutely nothing about it in the Bible at all. There was another picture also which went against the religious feelings of the community.

Q. On that ground you cut it?

A. It shows seduction after seduction going on at the very beginning. Many ladies and gentlemen see those pictures, and these methods of seduction are not desirable to be shown on the screen.

Chairman: In that case the film will become less and less popular. When the audience finds that it is not a film which should be seen they will avoid going to it.

A. Yes, but only after seeing it once. Many of these pictures if dealt with at the original source could be very easily altered to suit the public taste.

Q. I suppose you recognise that these things are made in foreign countries and that India and Burma are a small part in the theatre world and in the film trade. You will be able to recognise that fact if you know that the number of theatres in the Western countries is 40,000 and that in India and Burma put together is only 350. Also the seating capacity of the Indian theatre is very small as compared with that of Western theatres.

Mr. Green: Knowing what a Board of Censors in India has done, can you tell us whether the Board exercises its powers merely in the case of new films?

A. I had an instance the other day where a rotten film was censored and it was reported it was not cut out.

Q. And in such cases you could prosecute?

Mr. Merrikin: We get information if parts are cut out. For example, in the case of an Indian film we are informed as to what parts are cut out.

Q. In Bombay and Bengal, for example, their certificates are issued in a certain way if any part has been cut out. They mark such certificates with a triangle or a cross.

A. We have triangles here.

Q. That is sufficient indication to you on similar occasions.

A. We have got red triangles on the left-hand corner of the certificate.

Chairman: I asked you about it?

A. Yes.

Dr. Murray: Just one other matter, Sir, that was discussed. In connection with the question of having a Central Board which might serve as an appellate authority over the Provincial Boards, I have discussed it with other unofficial representatives of the public and of our own Board. We rather feel that when we as a body have come to a decision on a matter affecting this province that decision should be left uninterfered with, no matter what the others may think. I mean if Bengal prefers to allow a thing which we, the representatives of the people here in Burma, have definitely recommended as not passable we should not be interfered with in our decision.

Chairman: Although it may be on general moral grounds?

A. Supposing we say a certain picture is morally wrong and we differ in this view from another Board. In that case we should be left to ourselves.

Q. Although it has no reference to local conditions?

Colonel Crawford: The number of cases in which there has been difference of opinion as between one Board and another Board has during the last 8 years amounted only to 16 so far, which, obviously, is not much.

A. I say this simply on moral grounds; there is the risk of danger to the public. In fact I know a gentleman who, whenever he wants to take his wife and daughter to cinema, has himself to go and see the film first. Because he fears that otherwise he might go to a film which he considers not desirable to be seen.

Q. I see that there are many individuals in Burma who differ from you very much in this view.

A. May I mention in this connection that this Association has not really expressed their views. I am a member of the Vigilance Society and I expressed my original views and they did not endorse them.

Q. Difference of opinion as between province and province to-day amounts only to 16 films in the course of 8 years, when many thousands of films have been censored. That means obviously that the moral standard of the Boards of Censors are practically identical. That is shown by the results so far. The only question is to decide the moral standard when such very occasional films, about which there are differences of opinion between one Board and another Board, come up.

Chairman: And the public will show it. If the moral tone is not satisfactory they will not go. When the public feeling is very strong on a film it will naturally fail.

Colonel Crawford: Can you say whether films in Burma are seen from the educational point of view or simply for amusement?

Captain de Cordova: Both.

Q. Do the troops go to the cinema?

A. Yes. Particularly when western films are exhibited.

Q. Do Indian troops also go?

A. Practically not at all.

Chairman: Why? Are the cinemas here out of bounds to the Indian troops?

A. No. They are not inclined to go. Perhaps, they consider it as too expensive.

Oral Evidence of Mr. M. S. MERRIKIN, as Commissioner of Police, Rangoon, on Wednesday, the 18th January 1928.

Chairman: There is only one more matter on which I propose to trouble you. Your experience as a Police Commissioner extends to the whole of this province?

A. Yes.

Q. How many years have you been in the country?

A. For 22 years.

Q. How long in Rangoon?

A. I came to Rangoon first in 1922. Then I was away for about 18 months.

Q. You say there was a break of 18 months after 1922?

A. Yes.

Q. You have been in the habit of attending cinemas more or less from that date?

A. Yes.

Q. Probably there were some cinemas even before that date?

A. Yes, but not in such large numbers.

Q. So far as crime or criminal methods are concerned, we see a lot of outcry in the press now and then that the cinema has introduced or increased crime in the country or has introduced new criminal methods.

A. I do not think that the cinema has had any effect at all on the increase of crime. It is quite possible that it may have suggested methods of committing crime to the Burmans.

Q. You mean to say in the way of dacoities with motor cars, etc.?

A. Dacoities have long been a popular form of crime in Burma. Before railways came in, the dacoits travelled to and from the scene of crime on foot. When the railways came in, the dacoits used the railways, and, when motor-cars came in, they used motor-cars. When other modern methods suggest themselves as facilitating the commission of crime, the criminals will adopt those methods, and I do not think the cinema has had anything to do with the adoption of new methods in the commission of crime.

Q. Probably the use of instruments or other methods of committing crime may be shown on the screen?

A. There is very little of that sort of thing shown, I think.

Q. So you don't think there is anything in seeing or learning from the cinema. You think it is only an advancement of general knowledge that the people get, which of course may be used by them both for good and for bad?

A. Yes. I do not think there is anything wrong there.

Q. You don't agree in that general view that the cinema has introduced novel methods of committing crime?

A. I do not agree.

Q. Yesterday several people were telling us here that the cinema has introduced crime here; that was why I put the question to you. At any rate, that seems to be the belief among a few people. I dare say you, being in touch every day with crime and criminals, are in a position to assure the public that it is not the case. For instance, the National Council of Women in Burma, say: "The question of crime picture is more difficult. There is a strong feeling that the exhibition of 'crime pictures' bears a definite relation to the increase of crime in the province. At the same time it is impossible to exclude crime from a faithful portrayal of life; it is incidental to most of the great dramatic stories of the world. Crime on the films, if treated with dramatic sincerity and artistic restraint, need not pander to the latent criminal instincts of humanity; but the crime pictures generally shown, which disregard the law of cause and effect, throw a glamour over the criminal, and give a false view of life, are likely to have a disastrous influence, particularly on young people. It is to be feared that tinkering with such films is of little use; the evil lies deeper than any Censorship can touch, except by banning the whole film. If censorship authorities would agree to do this, the theatre managers would find it worth their while to combine and insist on a better standard of production in the studios." Do you agree with this view?

A. I do not agree with that. I think that most of the members of my board do not also agree with that.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: Have the police anything to do with the cinemas in the way of inspection or supervision of the cinema houses?

A. You mean in regard to the construction of the house, proper precautions against fire and all that?

Q. No, not in the construction (but reads from a book) "Cinema houses have to be regularly inspected to ensure that uncertified films are not being exhibited, that certified films are not being shown with interpolations, that films certified in other provinces are fit for local exhibition, etc., as well as to see that the conditions of the license are being obeyed. The duty of such inspection falls no doubt partly on the licensing authority and the police...."

A. The Police exercise general supervision over cinema houses, but no special steps are taken to see whether uncertified films are exhibited. As a matter of fact, all cinema halls furnish the Board beforehand with their weekly programmes, and, as all of these are checked by the clerk to the Board, it is extremely improbable that any uncertified film can make its appearance in Rangoon without detection.

Q. Then who attends to all these things?

A. The members of the board.

Q. The members themselves?

A. The members themselves visit each cinema show. Each film would be visited by one member once a month. In the old days when the board members were paid Rs. 30 as fees, the members used to visit the cinema once a week, but when Government reduced the fees to Rs. 20, the non-official members protested against such reduction and now I think they generally visit the cinema only once a month.

Q. Do you think a visit once a month is quite sufficient?

A. I do not think so; but I do not think the non-official members can be expected to do more than that.

Q. You can engage an inspector to see all the films. Don't you think that would be better?

A. Certainly, if Government are willing to pay for an inspector. That would certainly be better.

Q. I mean you can have a police inspector?

A. If Government are willing to depute a police inspector for this purpose, I have no objection.

Mr. Green: You said just now that dacoity is a favourite crime in this province. Would you go further and say that it is a form of amusement to the Burmans?

A. I should say it is in some cases.

Q. Does it possibly suggest that far from the cinema encouraging crime, it has supplied an alternative form of amusement and may consequently even decrease crime?

A. Yes, that is the opinion I have already given.

Q. I take it that though you have got no special police for inspecting cinemas, you have a certain number of policemen on duty in the cinemas for the purpose of preserving law and order?

A. Yes, we have.

Q. Are none of them competent to say if they think that anything either in the theatre or in the film is objectionable?

A. None of the policemen on duty has any special instructions in this respect. They are only on duty outside the cinema and not inside it. But as a matter of fact, although they have got no direct orders to do so, they generally report to the board if there is anything really worth reporting.

Q. And you, as Commissioner of Police, as apart from being the President of the Censorship board, have powers to take action on these reports?

A. Yes. I have got powers as Commissioner of Police. If I consider a film is likely to create ill-feeling or disorder, I can stop the film on my own authority.

Colonel Crawford: Do you consider that these studios should be licensed?

A. I do not see why they should be licensed, except as I said in my note, to prevent uncertified films leaving Rangoon and being shown up-country.

Q. There is no other necessity?

A. I cannot see that it will serve any other useful purpose.

Q. It will bring some measure of control?

A. I do not see why Government should control that really. To my mind it is a matter of private enterprise.

Oral Evidence of Mr. M. M. OHN GHINE, M.L.C., President of the Corporation of Rangoon, on Thursday, the 19th January 1928.

Chairman: I suppose you have seen our questionnaire?

A. I have seen the questionnaire. I have been a member of the censorship board until recently and I have seen the answers given by the Commissioner of Police as President of the Board. I agree generally with all that he has said except on a few minor points. The first point is about the statement "Western films are more profitable to exhibitors than either Burmese or Indian films". I am not sure that it is true in all cases, because I know that some of the Burmese films are good films. They are shown I think two or three times a day and they are carried on for about three weeks, and in some cases even five or six weeks. And the cost also is not very much. I think it will be profitable to use Burmese films. That is the first point I wanted to mention.

Q. Do you know how the producers are remunerated on the Burmese films?

A. I do not exactly know; but from enquiries I have made, I find that they are not on a very lavish scale. They are generally under-paid rather than over-paid.

Q. The producers?

A. I mean the actors, that is those who take part.

Q. I mean between the producer and the man who provides the finance?

A. I think the arrangement is half and half; but I understand Madama people are giving two-thirds to the producers. Of course, that I think will be only as a temporary measure, and we do not know how long that arrangement will last.

Q. What about the actors and actresses? Do you know whether they are well paid?

A. I do not think so.

Q. So the cost of production is small, because they are not well paid?

A. That is due to that partly and also due to the fact that there is not much equipment.

Q. What is the next point you wanted to refer to?

A. The next point is this: The local producers need a hall for the exhibition of local films. Somehow there is some difficulty in their way and it is just possible that there may be a rush of western films at one period or other and local films may have no chance.

Q. But if the Burmese films are going to be popular, as you say they are popular, why should that be the case? I think the producers get more from Burmese films?

A. They are getting one-third of the total receipts, but that may not be sufficient from the producer's point of view.

Q. You think perhaps on western films they can get more?

A. Yes, generally.

Q. What is it that stands in their way now?

A. Probably lack of funds. I think only three of the local companies are on a fairly sound basis; the rest are all mush-room companies and probably they will fade away in a short time.

Q. They just produce a film and then keep quiet, I suppose for a time? Probably they do not do it systematically?

A. No, they do not do it systematically. For instance, the London Art Photo Company have a good run on a particular film, then four or five people get together and subscribe Rs. 15,000 and produce a film with similar features but of indifferent quality and they fail.

Q. Have there been many such cases?

A. I think so.

Q. You mean that people with finance do not go into this business?

A. No, not on a large scale.

Q. What is the reason, if it is a paying concern?

A. The business is just starting.

Q. What do you suggest should be done in order to help the industry?

A. That is a difficult matter for giving an opinion on. I think it does require some help, but I do not see on what basis it can be helped.

Q. You think perhaps that some facilities may be given by Government banks?

A. Yes, that would help much.

Q. Especially in the way of long-term loans on easy terms, with sufficient safeguards. That will do some good?

A. Yes, I think so.

Q. What about technical knowledge?

A. So far as the photography is concerned, I think it is fairly good.

Q. But not up to the mark? Can you compare it with the western films?

A. No.

Q. Have you seen Chinese films?

A. I have seen some Chinese films and the best Chinese film is better than the Burman film, but I think the average Chinese film is not better than the average Burman film.

- Q. They act better, I thought?
- A. I do not know about that.
- Q. Do you think scholarships should be instituted for training people in photography, acting, direction, etc.?
- A. I think so.
- Q. You think it should be done?
- A. Yes, that would help the industry.
- Q. Or do you prefer sending for an expert here to train our people on the spot?
- A. I think it is better to send our people abroad and enable them to see things for themselves.
- Q. To your knowledge, I suppose the film is not taken advantage of for mass education in this province?
- A. Not sufficiently yet. I think there is sufficient room for it. The Public Health Department have produced one film I think, for this purpose.
- Q. Was it popular, was it liked by the people?
- A. I do not know whether it has been shown at all. They have just produced it. I think the demand for these films will grow as they are produced and when the people come to know about them.
- Q. Who do you think should produce such public utility propaganda films?
- A. I think the Government should.
- Q. In that view, do you think Government should give orders to studios already in existence, or should they establish their own studio where there can be experts who may attend to the production of their own films and who can also assist the private industry?
- A. I think they can make use of the existing producing companies. It is more economical and satisfactory, I think.
- Q. Don't you recognise the advantage of having a Government studio for producing their own public utility propaganda films and the lending of such facilities to the private producers in producing their commercial films?
- A. Yes, I quite recognise it would be a good thing; but of course the cost will be prohibitive. We have not sufficient money to turn out a sufficient number of films, and the cost of maintaining such a studio will be too much, I think.
- A. But as a sort of pioneering work just for a few years till the industry establishes itself, don't you think that would be useful?
- A. The Government of India might have a central studio of that sort.
- Q. Would it be of much use to your province?
- A. That is true, it may be too far away and it may not suit our province.
- Q. But where should the local peculiarities be produced?
- A. They must be produced locally.
- Q. I suppose a few local companies and the central studio may do that for a short period. That may be tried, you think?
- A. Yes.
- Q. Would you, as a public man, advocate the expenditure of public funds on this purpose?
- A. To produce educational films, you mean?
- Q. Yes.
- A. Yes, I will advocate that.
- Q. You also think those studios may be of use to the private producer for taking technical advice?
- A. Yes, I agree that it will be a proper expenditure of public funds.
- Q. I suppose the cinema is getting more and more popular with the people?

- A. Yes, it is.
- Q. Supposing we are deprived of the cinema altogether, do you think a great void will be created?
- A. I think so. The cinema has come to play a very important part in the every day life of the people even in the districts.
- Q. Have you any idea as to whether the cinema keeps these people from mischievous propensities, etc.?
- A. Possibly it does.
- Q. We were told that in Burma men are idle and they plot and do things and that but for cinema-going, such a tendency would grow?
- A. I won't go so far as that.
- Q. On the whole you are satisfied with the tone of the films shown in this province, i.e., western films?
- A. I cannot say I am satisfied. There has been a great improvement of late and possibly there is more room to be for improvement.
- Q. There is no demoralising effect, I suppose?
- A. No.
- Q. Either on the young men or old?
- A. No.
- Q. Do students go to the cinema here very often?
- A. Yes, they do.
- Q. What class of films do they generally like?
- A. I think very largely the Burmese students patronise the Burmese films.
- Q. Although the technique is very poor?
- A. Yes, they don't mind it now.
- Q. I suppose the Burman loves a lot of super-natural things introduced in the films which are shown. That is suitable to the Burmese taste, I believe?
- A. Yes, at present.
- Q. Do you think the Burmese films will have any demand in America or any other country outside Burma?
- A. No, not as they are at present.
- Q. I notice Burman films are attended only by Burmans not even by Indians and Chinese, much less by the Anglo-Indians or Europeans.
- A. Very few attend such films and even they go there only as a matter of curiosity once in a way.
- Q. So it would not be a commercial proposition to show such films outside Burma?
- A. No.
- Q. Do you know whether any Burmese films have been shown outside Burma?
- A. I believe some of the producers have exported certain of their productions.
- Q. We saw a Chinese film yesterday which we thought might be shown with advantage in other parts. Of course some of the Burmese films can be shown in India at least. Are Burmese films exported to China or Singapore or any other place where there is a Burmese population?
- A. I do not think so.
- Q. Do you see any difference in the moral standard of films from abroad as between country and country?
- A. No, I think they are much the same. I have been to India and I have visited various cinemas there.
- Q. The standard here is the same as in India?
- A. I think so.

Q. Have you travelled in England?

A. Yes.

Q. I suppose the films there are much the same?

A. Yes, I think so.

Q. Have you noticed any difference in the way in which social life is handled? Do you pause to think whether a certain film is American or British or German, when you see a film?

A. No.

Q. Can you tell us whether you have marked any difference in the way in which subjects are handled by the respective countries?

A. No, I cannot say that, I noticed anything.

Colonel Crawford: Do you yourself prefer the Burmese film to the western film?

A. No, I do not.

Q. That means to say the moment one becomes educated and cultured, one demands a certain amount of quality and possibly would desire more action than is shown on the Burmese stage?

A. Yes, that is so. But in Burmese films first of all the dresses are not true to life or history either. There is a mixture of various costumes from various countries. The second point is that the plots are not good. They try to put in some action, but generally one action is not carried over to another quickly. Sometimes they show a man riding on horseback for about two or three minutes, where it should be shown only for one second.

Q. We were told there is really no Burmese fiction.

A. There is a lot of Burmese fiction. They have enough stories to draw upon. I think depicting modern life does not appeal to the modern people and so they take to historical pieces.

Q. Is there enough popularity for the Burman films or should something be done to improve them?

A. It is possible there is sufficient competition to keep the producers up to the mark. I think they will themselves see and do something but of course help would be of great use to them.

Q. The moment they try to improve their standard of pictures, would it not necessitate the expenditure of a larger amount of money? You have suggested just now that the Burman pictures are not of interest outside Burma, not as produced at present. Therefore they are confined to the Burman market which I presume is definitely small and therefore if they spend more money they will not be able to recover their production costs from the small market available. What is the way out of the difficulty, if that is the correct position?

A. I do not think they have reached the marginal point. A film costing half a lakh would easily give that much profit again. Half a lakh on a film could still draw from the Burmese market both the cost of production and the additional profit.

Q. You think that is the position.

A. Yes.

Q. I think Rs. 15,000 should get a good return.

A. I don't know myself definitely. I am trying to find out.

Q. I understand it is the financial position, the producing industry is more in the nature of individual speculation than of any definitely formed companies. Is that the position?

A. Yes.

Q. What happens to these producers, during the rains?

A. I don't know what they do during the rains. They must close down in Rangoon. I think the London Art Photo Co., people have got their arc lamp to run their studio during the rains.

Q. As regards the possibility of expanding your market of Burman films, I presume from your knowledge of the west you would say that the producer should have his production so made as to meet the requirements of western audiences. Is that a possibility here?

A. I doubt it. The cost would be prohibitive.

Q. Even with the assistance of a western agency?

A. Personally, I do not think so.

Q. Can you not think of Burman stories which would provide a sensational film suitable to western audiences?

A. They might appeal to British audiences as a matter of curiosity. But I don't think the interest would be sustained.

Chairman: If you made them attractive to the western audiences, they would cease to interest the Burman audience?

A. There is the danger.

Mr. Green: Am I right in gathering that the local producers are not really very cultured, I mean so far as their market is concerned they are more or less uncultured? You told us that you preferred to see western films.

A. I explained the subject already.

Q. It is not lack of culture but lack of possibility for Burman films to get any variety?

A. It is possible to develop them in due course.

Q. Are they grafting any western ideas in their film production?

A. No. They seem to be bent on copying western films and frequently take plots from English novels.

Q. They try to improve their films by copying western films?

A. Yes, until they have exhausted them.

Chairman: By that time the brain would not be working at all.

Mr. Neogy: You are a business man, I take it?

A. Yes.

Q. You have stated that the chief difficulty with the Burmese producer is want of finance.

A. I think so.

Q. There is, I take it, also the sense of insecurity of the trade which accounts for the comparative indifference of the capitalists towards this time. Is this so?

A. Yes.

Q. Now supposing Government were to embark upon a policy of assisting the film industry and entrusting their work to the private producers here, do you think that circumstance would enhance their credit and enable the producers to attract more capital?

A. It depends upon the value of the work given.

Q. As a sort of an assured contractor of Government, would the producer be able to get more capital?

A. It might have that effect.

Q. Supposing Government, on the other hand, were to have a studio of their own, that might assist the producers to get training in some technical aspect of film production.

A. But that certainly would not enable him to get more capital.

Q. There are two alternatives. Government starting a studio of their own for their own propaganda films which might be helpful to the producers concerned in so far as they may show them the methods of film production on more up-to-date lines. And the other is Government entrusting their work to the private producers, it being left to the private producers to arrange their own capital and also undertake any improvements in the technique that may be necessary. Which would you prefer on the whole?

A. Well, it is difficult to say at once. Both would be of help to the producers.

Q. But having regard to the fact that the chief difficulty is one of finance which, do you think, would be more beneficial?

A. The local producers should be given a chance to do Government's work before Government starts its own studio.

Mr. Green: Is there any place outside Burma where there is a Buddhist population to which your films could be sent?

A. No.

Q. So the field is limited by the geographical boundary?

A. Yes.

Q. Is there any chance of the market being extended once the cinema becomes popular in the rural areas?

A. There is some chance in that direction.

Chairman: Why do you think the film will not be popular in India. We saw some films the other day. They were consistently good and they might appeal to an Indian audience.

A. I doubt whether the film produced in Burma would appeal to the people of India and of the West.

Q. I was struck with the Burman show that I asked about it. The information I got was that Burman rowdies are exhibited in the film. That is why people do not generally go to these shows.

A. I do not think there is anything in it. After all Burmese girls go there and there is no trouble. Talking about the attitude of Government towards the cinema, I understand that Government proposes to withdraw the financial contribution that they are now making towards the Censor Board. I think that Government is under-rating the importance of the work done by the Board of Censors. I think it would be a mistake if they did it. There is no strong public opinion in Rangoon and the Censoring is done by the actual censors.

Mr. Neogy: Are you satisfied with the present constitution of the Board of Censors?

A. I think it is working well.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: Are you a member of the Board?

A. I was a member.

Q. You have now resigned?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you think it would be a good thing if the Board is enlarged and it works as an advisory body to Government in order to encourage the film industry.

A. Yes, it could be enlarged with advantage.

Q. There are no Chinese or Indian members on the Board.

A. No. I think the censoring of Indian films is done by the Indian officers of Police.

Q. Would it not be a good thing to have them on the Board? I think there is on the Censor Board a representative of this population. You cannot appoint another until he resigns?

A. In the case of the Corporation representation, election to the Board takes place once in three years.

Q. Would it not be a good thing to nominate people every year or they come in by election?

A. I think they should be given a chance to work for at least three years, because it would take some time to pick up the whole work.

Q. If Indian films with Burmese captions are sent here, do you think the Burmans would like to go and see them?

A. No. An experiment was made by a French lady, dressed in Burmese style. It was a failure. People would not go and see it.

Q. Suppose Burmese films with Indian titles are sent to India, would they have a good market?

A. I don't think so.

Q. The Siamese and the Ceylonese are interested in Burman films. Are they sent from here?

A. No, they are not sent from here.

Q. There is the report of the Burman Women's National Council. They recommend that there ought to be a children's performance separately.

A. I think children should be excluded from adult shows.

Q. Do you want to have separate shows for children?

A. Yes.

Q. With a children's programme and special pictures for children?

A. Yes.

Q. You want the programme of the performance to be finished before 8 o'clock?

A. Yes.

Chairman: Do you think it would be paying to the trade?

A. Yes, it should be paying. We have a fair number of school children in Rangoon. But it would not be as paying as the other ordinary films.

Q. I mean would you compel the management to have a children's performance?

A. How can we compel them. I think some references were made in the papers about the film "Life of Buddha".....

Q. You have seen the film?

A. I saw that film myself and I understand from the papers that one of the members of the Censor Board said that it was only one man that objected to it. I was present at the show which Madan Theatres gave and my own impression, and from what I have heard of the picture, is that it was objectionable.

Q. In what respect?

A. The Burmans look upon Buddha as a Burman. There were also deviations as regards dress, the mode of living from the accepted version in the Scriptures. The Indian version must differ from the Buddhistic version and that would probably give offence.

Q. We heard of another objection that Buddha should not be represented by a man.

A. There is also that feeling, that no man should take the part of Buddha.

Q. So that it is not a question of dress. If that is so there should be no film on the life of Buddha.

A. There was an argument as to what nationality Buddha belonged. Some vernacular newspapers held him to be Burman.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: Is there any sculpture in which Buddha is represented in the local costume rather than the traditional costume?

A. No; but they would expect semi-Mongolian features for Buddha.

Q. When you attended the meeting of the Board, was there any business to do, or you simply came and went away?

A. I have never attended a meeting when there was no business. There was always some business to be transacted.

Q. One or two items at least?

A. Yes.

Q. When going to examine the film, do you see the whole film or only some portion?

- A. The whole portion always, from beginning to end.
- Q. What do you say to the amusement tax? If it is levied would people go to look at the pictures?
- A. I object to the levy of such a tax. It may handicap the trade.
- Q. Suppose the money is ear-marked for education?
- A. That makes no difference.
- Q. Do these films bring their original certificates from the place from which they come?
- A. We raised that point only the other day.
- Q. What was the result?
- A. I don't know.
- Q. When was it raised? Recently?
- A. Yes; at the Board meeting.
- Q. You do not know what happened then?
- A. I don't know.
- Q. You have no cinema theatres of your own to examine the films?
- A. There are none.
- Q. Do you go to the other theatres?
- A. Yes.
- Q. Are there any travelling shows?
- A. I do not know. The Gaiety Company used to have a travelling show. I do not know whether they have stopped it.
- Q. You think it would be a good thing if the stories are censored before production?
- A. Well, I do not see how it is possible especially for the local producers. I think it would be better if the producers got their plots or ideas from somebody who is an expert and thus save themselves a lot of trouble and loss. I think the local producers have no definite scheme or plan before the pictures are produced. They go to the field where the pictures are to be taken and arrange to take them. It would be difficult to get them passed by the censor beforehand.
- Colonel Crawford: In answering the Chairman you gave me an idea that the Central studio is not necessary and in answer to Mr. Neogy you said that you prefer primarily private agency. As an additional point if Government were to undertake the production with the aid of experts would it provide a possible training ground for the local industry?
- A. Yes.
- Q. In view of that possibility do you still consider that private organisations should be tried first?
- A. I think so in all cases. It is only when the private agency is found to be insufficient that Government must step in.

Oral Evidence of Mrs. ARTHUR A. URE, O.B.E., Councillor, Corporation of Rangoon, and Honorary Secretary, R. S. P. C. A., Rangoon, on Thursday, the 19th January 1928.

Chairman: You are a member of the Corporation?

A. I am.

Q. And you are the Secretary, S. P. C. A.?

A. I am the Honorary Secretary.

Q. Are you connected with the National Council of Women of Burma?

A. I was the first Secretary.

- Q. Are you now connected with it?
- A. I have now given it up.
- Q. When did you give it up?
- A. In 1926.
- Q. Were you at all aware of the enquiry or something they made in connection with the cinema in Burma?
- A. That was done in 1927. I have not got anything to do with it.
- Q. Nor have you seen the report?
- A. I have read the report.
- Q. Have you favoured us with any statement?
- A. None at all.
- Q. We should like to know your views. Do you think there is anything wrong in these film shows in Burma?
- A. I do.
- Q. In the western films or in the Burmese films?
- A. In the western films.
- Q. In what respect?
- A. I think in many of the western films, more or less American films I think, they lower the prestige of the white women in many of the scenes and in many ways they give wrong ideas of white women.
- Q. But do you expect ordinary life on the film?
- A. It would be better if they did not represent it at all. They exaggerate it. I think many scenes in the films, particularly those from America, are very much lowering the prestige of the white women.
- Q. I think you have seen "The Rat"?
- A. I have. I don't think it is a good film, whether it is British or American.
- Q. In what way?
- A. The American films have more of the sensual in them. They are more exaggerated in their dealing with the sex.
- Q. Do you think there is a substantial difference between the way in which life is depicted on the film so far as the western films are concerned between country and country?
- A. I think the British film is not so exaggerated as the American film.
- Q. There is the same objection to "The Rat" as to any American film?
- A. I think so.
- Q. And do you think it is true to some parts of life?
- A. I have no doubt that it is quite true. But it is not always good to depict such life even if it be true.
- Q. You are taking objection to degrading western women in the eyes of other people?
- A. Yes.
- Q. Your objection is on that ground, not on any other ground?
- A. Not altogether. It has a lowering moral effect.
- Q. If the same film is exhibited in England, will there be the same objection?
- A. No.
- Q. It depends more on the country than on the nature of the production?
- A. Yes.
- Q. Let me understand it a little further. I think to begin with, talking from an Eastern point of view, it is not understood in the same way as the Western? Don't you think really that what they see in the picture only represents Western life?

A. They don't see the same thing that one could see in the home, or ordinary Western life.

Q. When they see you all here in actual life, if they see anything in the film which may be slightly exaggerated life, why should you object to it?

A. No, certainly not, we see in these pictures many bed-room and suggestive scenes which we in the West have absolutely no chance of seeing in a home in actual private life. People in England themselves have no chance of seeing these things in their own country. I think there is a big difference between the Western and the Eastern idea of life.

Q. Now let me take you a little further. Your objection will still hold good and possibly it will much more be the case if Western dramas are staged. You would also exclude Western dramas being staged here by Westerners? Although they may be good in England, they are bad here?

A. My objection still holds good in the case of Western dramas also.

Q. I think your objection will also hold good in the case of papers and journals like the Tatler. The Sketch, etc., where also similar pictures are depicted?

A. I don't think any indecent pictures are ever allowed into the Tatler, Sketch and such English journals.

Q. When you see ladies in bathing costume, advertisements for beauty prizes, etc., do you think such advertisements tend to lower the Western standards of morality?

A. I don't think they tend to improve the standard.

Q. I suppose you have been to Paris?

A. Yes.

Q. I suppose you have visited the "Folies Bergeres"?

A. No, I have not.

Q. You know thousands of people visit those places, but I suppose you wouldn't like such scenes reproduced here?

A. No, not here, nor in England either.

Q. Although thousands of people flock there every day?

A. That is their mentality.

Q. I suppose your idea is that you should see only the best of every country and not the worst of it?

A. Yes, as far as possible.

Q. Your point is that no good is done, possibly harm is done?

A. Yes, that is my view.

Q. Do you think this bad effect is produced upon the minds of the educated Indian or the uneducated Indian?

A. I think more so in the minds of the uneducated Indian. I suppose educated Indians will look at it from a different point of view.

Q. I am told that the average Burman here is very fond of the stage himself, and he knows that the stage is an exaggeration of life and he does not believe it represents normal life. Why should he think differently if he sees a Western film?

A. I don't know why he should. Still it is an apprehension—not that I am satisfied he does.

Q. Is it your point there should be a different standard of censorship adopted from the Censorship Board at Home? You want the Burma Board of Film Censors to be more strict on questions of general morality?

A. Yes, I think so.

Q. Do you think there would be any difference in the ideals of morality between the East and the West. There may be differences in the conventions or standards but there might not be any difference in the ideals of morality between the East and the West?

A. I don't think I am in a position to answer that question.

Q. That is your only objection against the Western films and you want them to be further strictly censored?

A. Yes.

Q. You have got only nearly 65 theatres in Burma whereas in the West they cater for nearly 40,000 theatres. The producers in the West don't manufacture films to suit the tastes of the East. It is only a trifle to them. So, I want to point out to you that a stricter censorship here would not affect them in any way?

A. I think if we make a strict censorship, the importers here would be more careful in the selections they make.

Q. Do you know what profits these cinema houses make?

A. I have absolutely no idea about that.

Q. What I want to point out to you is that film producers in the West will not at all be affected by your being more strict in censorship in Burma. The remedy lies more in the place of production than here?

A. I should think mostly the same films which come to India come to Burma also and there are a fairly large number. Is it possible to make some sort of selection before the films are sent out? Who is to make the selection?

Chairman: I suppose you don't advocate the closing of the cinema?

A. No, I don't. On the other hand, I believe if they are better managed and had better pictures, useful knowledge could be spread through them, such subjects as travel and natural history.

Q. You have said that portions of some of the Western films, you object to. May I ask whether you see such objectionable things very frequently?

A. That I cannot tell you. I don't go to the Cinemas very much.

Q. So, much of your belief is based on outside talk, is it?

A. No, no. That is my own experience.

Q. Have you seen them very frequently or now and then?

A. I wished that on 2 or 3 occasions when I saw the pictures at any rate, some portions had been removed.

Q. How often do you go to the Cinema?

A. Say, once a month or once in two months, when good pictures are on.

Q. So your view is that supposing you had witnessed these cinemas a dozen times you would have seen these objectionable portions 2 or 3 times, I suppose. Is that right?

A. Yes.

Colonel Crawford: I gather, your opinion is, no matter from what country they come from, some of the films that have come in ought to be improved?

A. Yes.

Q. And when they particularly, come to India you feel that Indians have a wrong impression of the West because these films are rather exaggerated and real life is not depicted correctly?

A. That is really my point.

Q. In answer to the Chairman you referred to objectionable films. Can you give me an idea what the particular type of scenes are which you consider objectionable?

A. I think, particularly the love scenes and also bed-room scenes and things of that kind where white women are seen depicted in, what I call, situations which an Indian woman would misunderstand, and the point of view of the Indian must necessarily be taken from the point of view of how he would like to see his own women depicted. I don't want to see the prestige of the white woman lowered.

Chairman: The prestige won't be lowered.

A. I think so. I believe prestige will be much lowered. I speak from my own point of view of a white woman's life.

Colonel Crawford : When you speak of love scenes, is there any particular mode of kissing to which you object to?

A. Yes, the way it is done.

Q. Particularly prolonged scenes of kissing, I suppose?

A. Yes.

Q. In fact you object to passionate scenes, I suppose?

A. Yes.

Q. You don't think that it is having a moral effect upon the people in this country?

A. No, I don't think so.

Q. So, your point is that it gives a wrong perspective. Is there any particular danger in that? Have you any knowledge of the danger arising from it?

A. It is my own personal view of things and other white ladies also desire that something should be done.

Mr. Green : I take it you have particular experience in this Province?

A. Yes, I have.

Q. Have you any experience of India?

A. No.

Q. You know very much more about Burman habits than I do. But I understand the social code is very much stricter in Burma, in outward appearance at any rate?

A. I think it is.

Q. I am told that even touching is not considered proper?

A. That is right.

Q. Does it necessarily follow that the Burman morality is better than Western or the reverse of it? The point that I am trying to get at in this. Now if touching is hardly considered right under the social code in Burma a thing like public-kissing is no doubt objectionable. Would you, therefore, advocate all kissing of any type to be cut out from the films?

A. Perhaps I would not go to that length. Perhaps an ordinary kiss is chaste enough.

Q. Is that not against the Burman code? would not even the most chaste kiss be foreign to their social code?

A. Yes, but a chaste kiss does not, I suppose, convey anything bad or suggestive.

Q. Things admittedly inoffensive to the eyes of any European lady may be considered highly objectionable by the Burman?

A. Yes, quite true.

Q. Then where is it you will draw the line?

A. I admit, it is very difficult.

Q. Is it not a thing which will solve itself by education and growth of knowledge, particularly education through the film?

A. I don't advocate that passionate prolonged kissing should be allowed.

Q. Your impression is that the existing Boards of Censors don't draw the line quite tightly enough, but you don't want to shut out from the screen everything, as long as there is no undue exaggeration?

A. Yes.

Mr. Neogy : I take it you represent the views of English women in Burma?

A. I think so.

Q. Is there a considerable number of American women here?

A. Yes, there are American ladies as well, mostly engaged on Missionary educational work.

Q. Now, you know a very large number of films are manufactured in America, and it may be that more than 90 per cent. of the films shown in India and Burma are American in origin?

A. It may be so.

Q. Are you aware of any complaint from your American friends with regard to the lowering of their prestige through their films?

A. No, not to my knowledge.

Q. I take it that the pictures produced by the Americans, a very large percentage of them, are reproductions of American life, that is to say, they produce pictures representing their own life more than English life. There are certain pictures representing English life produced in America as well but they are small?

A. It may be so.

Q. If America does not take any exception to those pictures shown in India on the ground of lowering the prestige of their womanfolk, I don't know why the English women in India should take up the cudgels?

A. Does the audience make any distinction?

Q. Then it verily comes to a question of White vs. Black. It is not a question of Nationality at all?

A. You are speaking from a very different point of view. It is more a difference in idea of what is right and wrong. I don't consider it is a question of White vs. Coloured at all.

Q. Have you ever tried to communicate your views to the White producer?

A. No.

Q. Does it not strike you that the real remedy lies there and not here?

Chairman : Supposing in England the public raised a volume of protest against these films, that will have a more lasting effect upon the producers than your protest here?

A. Yes, that is clear enough. I would like to make a suggestion in this connection. If it were possible, it would be very good to have a travelling cinema with Natural history and other films, as we very often have in England, most suitable for exhibition to Indian women and children. I like the Indian women very much. I know her intelligence very well as I have worked myself in their midst in connection with Health exhibitions. I know they will appreciate these travelling health films very much. I think it would be a move in the right direction from an educational and instructional point of view, as well as amuse and interest.

Q. That is one of the points which we have in mind now as you will see from question 14 in the questionnaire issued by the Committee.

Oral Evidence of Mr. HASHIM AHMED ATCHIA, Managing Proprietor, King's Cinema, Rangoon, on Thursday, the 19th January 1928.

Chairman : You are the Manager of the Burma Film Company?

A. I am not the Manager, but I have been helping the Manager. I am the Managing Proprietor of the King's Cinema in Rangoon.

Q. What do you show there?

A. We have not started it yet. It is under construction.

Q. You propose to run it yourself? Or are you going to rent it out?

A. We have not yet decided.

Q. Is that your experience of the cinema?

A. My father has been in this line for 16 years. I had been helping him.

Q. How was he in the line?

A. He had two cinemas here, the Cinema de Paris and the Royal Cinema and he was also distributing for these two cinemas.

Q. Is he continuing?

A. No, he ceased in 1922.

Q. Why? What became of the cinemas?

A. He had some financial trouble and has closed this business, having handed over to his agent.

Q. Was he the proprietor or only the exhibitor?

A. Being the proprietor he also ran shows.

Q. Both the exhibitor and the proprietor?

A. Yes, and he was also a distributing agent.

Q. You assisted your father?

A. Yes.

Q. Since then your experience is confined to assisting this gentleman, the Burma Films Service?

A. Yes.

Q. What is this Burma Films Service?

A. They are the films distributing agents.

Q. Only to the districts?

A. They distribute to the district cinema shows and also in Rangoon.

Q. Wherefrom do you get them?

A. We deal with the locally produced films. We are distributors of Burman films.

Q. How many producing agents entrust to you their films? At present 6.

A. They all send their films to me and we act as a distributing agent.

Q. Do you hire them out?

A. Yes, we generally hire them out to the exhibitor.

Q. On what basis do you hire them?

A. On hire system.

Q. Fixed rate?

A. Yes, fixed rate for certain films.

Q. How much does the producer get for his film?

A. The producer gets 90 per cent. and we get 10 per cent. of the receipts got from the exhibitor.

Q. How much do you get from him?

A. It depends on the merits of the films.

Q. Yes, but how does it range? What is the lowest and what is the highest?

A. It depends on the stations. In Mandalay and other big stations we get more and in small stations we get little.

Q. There is no fixed rate? You settle it then and there? You get fixed hire?

A. Yes.

Mr. Green: You don't take according to percentage?

A. No.

Chairman: Have there been Burmese films which ran many weeks in Rangoon?

A. I don't follow you Sir.

Q. Is one film exhibited for 3 or 4 or 5 weeks continuously?

A. Yes.

Q. Are there many Burman films of that sort?

A. No, there have been a few. Not many.

Q. What is the ordinary length of time a film is shown?

A. 2 weeks.

Q. For any film?

A. If it is a paying concern, it is run for a longer time. Ordinarily it is for 2 weeks.

Q. How many theatres show only Burman pictures in Rangoon?

A. At present only 2. They show Burman pictures only.

Q. Is there any theatre which shows both western and Burman pictures?

A. Yes; Elphinstone Bioscope.

Q. Do you know the producers well?

A. Yes, I know the Burman film producers well.

Q. What sort of people are they? Men of sufficient capital or men of sufficient learning?

A. Generally few of them are men of capital. They do business on borrowed capital. So far as my experience goes, 3 or 4 of them are financially well off. Most of them are without any proper capital.

Q. Is the film a paying concern?

A. To some.

Q. Do they recover ordinarily the cost of production?

A. It depends on the films.

Q. Ordinarily. Not as a super-picture. Take a fairly good picture?

A. Probably in 2 months they make up the cost in Rangoon alone if it is a fairly good picture. But otherwise they will have to make up the cost in 3 months or 2½ months' time.

Q. Is the film generally run for several months?

A. It will go on even for a year or two if the picture is good. Ordinarily it will not go for more than a year.

Q. Are there many concerns, I mean producing agencies, which began and afterwards failed?

A. I think there are two or three. They started and they closed the business after a time. Though they have closed and not producing anything their name is still in existence and so they could not perhaps be said to have completely closed.

Q. When your father was owing picture houses and exhibiting was it a paying concern?

A. Yes.

Q. Then why did he part with them?

A. He had some financial troubles, of course on other matters. So he had to close them.

Q. Here I am told that the cinemas change hands frequently. That is to say the exhibitors do not continue to exhibit for a long time. Is it a fact and if so why is that?

A. Yes, it is a fact. It happened so in the case of about 2 or 3 cinemas.

Q. Why did they change hands?

A. Because on account of their being unable to manage them well. Not because they were not profitable. One of them I think was closed on account of being not profitable.

Q. Where are you building a new theatre?

A. Close to the existing theatres. Next to Excelsior.

Q. Is not that corner already overcrowded? There are 8 or 9 houses there?

A. 4 of them are there together.

Q. Still you think there is sufficient demand here for the expansion of theatres?

A. Yes, for one or two at the most now.

Q. Do you go to the mofussil at all? Do you know whether there are any travelling cinemas going about in the interior?

A. There are two travelling cinemas at present.

Q. Do you (I mean the Burma Film Service Corporation) supply to these travelling cinemas also?

A. Yes.

Q. You don't deal in western films?

A. We do.

Q. You don't import western films?

A. Not always. But occasionally we get them.

Q. Where do you get them from?

A. Sometimes we get them from London and sometimes from America.

Q. Are they second-hand films?

A. Yes.

Q. At what price you get them?

A. It depends on the pictures.

Q. What is the lowest price?

A. Rs. 1,000 will get a film on short subjects. Sometimes we pay Rs. 2,000 and Rs. 3,000 also. All that depends on the pictures.

Mr. Neogy: For how many years have you been doing this distributing work in the Burman films?

A. My father was doing this business for 8 years.

Q. You mean since the Burmese films came into existence?

A. Yes, my father was the first man to introduce the Burmese films.

Q. Do you also purchase productions?

A. Not always.

Q. Supposing a film is made over to you, do you generally advance any money?

A. If the producers are in need we do it.

Q. On what terms do you finance them?

A. In certain cases we charge interest.

Q. How much?

A. 1 to 2 per cent.

Chairman: Per month?

A. Yes. If he is an old client we charge him little and if a new man something more.

Mr. Neogy: That is the ordinary money-lender's rate?

A. Yes, but my father never used to charge any interest at all. Even otherwise only the usual rate of interest is charged.

Q. You then recoup yourself from the receipts?

A. Yes.

Q. Are there many distributing agencies like this?

A. Most probably there is one I think.

Q. If you undertake to distribute for any particular producing concern, is that concern free to enter into any agreement with any other distributing agency?

A. No. They give us the sole agency for distributing.

Q. Do you resort to "Blind booking"?

A. I don't think so.

Q. I may tell you that the Commissioner of Police thinks that there is a system of blind booking with regard to the Burmese pictures?

A. I don't think so.

Q. Is the exhibitor free to choose his own picture?

A. Yes, he is free.

Chairman: He selects his pictures?

A. Yes. The present custom is the exhibitor asks one of his own men or relatives to see the picture in Rangoon before booking some for the district. He gets some other agent to see that before booking it. In fact he takes the opinions before booking.

Q. Have you ever tried the Indian market for Burmese films?

A. We have not.

Mr. Neogy: You confine yourself only to Burma proper?

A. Yes.

Q. You have not tried what chances the Burmese pictures would have in Ceylon, Siam, the Straits and other places?

A. We have not tried so far. Because I don't think it will be paying. These Burmese films are generally have Burmese titles.

Q. What is the average cost of production of the usual class of Burmese films per foot?

A. I cannot say the cost per foot.

Q. What is the total cost?

A. About Rs. 6,000 for 12,000 feet.

Colonel Crawford: That comes to 8 annas per foot?

A. Some films cost even more than Rs. 30,000.

Q. Does this cost include all over-head charges, the charges of the Proprietor, Manager, etc.? I mean their remuneration?

A. Yes, it includes everything.

Q. Are there any recognised stars among the artistics in the Burman productions?

A. Yes, there are a few.

Mr. Neogy: When people go to see a Burmese picture or when an exhibitor books a Burmese film, are they generally guided by the "star" actors, that is to say, is any preference attached to the stars when the selection of the picture is made?

A. Yes.

Q. How many such stars are there at present in the Burmese picture concerns?

A. There are about half-a-dozen male actors and actresses. They mostly book on stars.

Q. You said that you were building a cinema house just now. What would it cost you? Will you tell us that if you have no objection?

A. It will cost over Rs. 80,000.

Q. Including or excluding the land?

A. Excluding the land. It is a lease-hold land.

Q. Including the furniture?

A. Yes. The complete cinema will cost over Rs. 80,000.

Q. Suppose you are to let out this building to an exhibitor, what rent will satisfy you?

A. We charge daily rates.

Q. Supposing it was a lease for a number of years. Say 5 years or so. How much would you charge?

A. I would charge between 2,500 and 3,000 a month.

Mr. Green: What is the seating capacity of the building?

A. 1,000.

Mr. Neogy: Has the rent of the cinema theatres gone up of late years?

A. No, on the other hand it has gone down. My father used to get from 300 to 350 rupees a day. At present it is only half that rate.

Q. Since when has this gone down?

A. From 1924.

Q. Are the various cinemas in Rangoon working as profitable concerns?

A. As I do not know the expense side of the present cinemas I cannot answer that question.

Mr. Green: You told the Chairman that usually after a year all the theatres in Burma finish with a particular picture. Don't you hire it out afterwards?

A. If there is any demand and somebody wants it we will hire it. Normally we do not.

Q. In that case what happens to that film?

A. Often they destroy it if the condition of the film is not satisfactory, and make a fresh copy of the negative. If goods, they perhaps keep it.

Q. But I cannot understand why they don't try and hire them out in Ceylon, India or in some such places. Anything they get out of it after that time will simply be extra profit?

A. We have suggested that to the film producing concerns but they have not taken any steps in that direction so far. So we dropped the matter.

Chairman: Perhaps that depends on the exhibitor in Madras?

A. One or two Burmese films with Indian titles will pay well as a novelty, but it will not pay in the long run as Burmese films are quite different from other productions, besides Indian productions are far better than Burmese at present, but nobody has tried it as far as I know.

Written Statement of the Burma Cinema Film Producers' Association, dated the 6th January 1928.

INTRODUCTORY.

1. Yes. On behalf The Burma Cinema Film Producers' Association.

GENERAL.

2. (a), (b) The people of Burma are almost fairly well educated in their own languages and citizens of towns (other than villages) are also fairly educated in English and therefore our opinion is—Educated as well as others are now-a-days fond of frequenting cinema shows to a greater extent and the attendance of both is on the increase.

(c) Burmese families have the tendency of taking their children to the cinema shows, we would therefore put it between 10 per cent. to 15 per cent.

PART I.

Film Industry in Burma.

3. No particular class of films is popular. It depends upon the high standard and quality of production.

6. (a) Yes.

(b) We refer to the reply to Question No. 3.

8. (a), (b) Yes, but we would like to co-operation of Local Government, Municipality and other Big Industrial Concerns in giving us necessary facilities by throwing open to us the use of Railway trains, Tramcars, Steamers, Aeroplanes, Zoos, public buildings, public gardens, etc.

11. Yes—and we have no other suggestion to make.

13. The question of Tariff is so wide that it is very difficult to suggest any particular measures but the main item is raw films, these in the majority

are imported from India, there being very little direct importation from abroad. However we would suggest duty on raw films be reduced to a reasonable extent. That would help the Industry to a great extent.

14. It would certainly help the Industry if it is of local manufacture, but we have had no demand so far either from Government or other Agencies.

15. We are inclined to say that conditions in this country are not favourable at the present stage of the Burma Film Industry—Besides even in our own country other nationalities (excepting Burmese) do not patronize Burmese Film at present.

16. There are some but not quite up to the standard of requirement. Government may best help the Industry by sending suitable candidates to America and Europe to learn the Industry in all its branches of production, manufacture, etc., etc.

17. We doubt and therefore our reply is in the negative.

18. We consider the present is not the suitable moment for Government to take any action whether Legislative or Administrative, as said before, the Burmese Film Industry is in its infancy and should be left alone for development.

19. The cost of film production, we consider, is not cheaper, comparing the expenditure and income at the present stage of our Industry.

20. (a) Yes, the cost of expenditure is infinitesimal in comparison to the good it would do to the country by fostering a vast Industry.

(b) From Provincial Revenue.

21. Opinion is not favourable. The foregoing suggestions are all that we need at present or could say at present as useful to our Industry. Therefore the present state and position of Industry to be maintained and left for improvement by its own endeavour. State Management or a Centralized Neutral Distributing Agency would be considered as interfering with the private rights of the Industry.

PART II.

Social aspects and control.

24. (a), (b) No.

(c) We are unable to state.

(d) 1, 2. Yes.

(e) No.

25. Yes.

26. (a) Yes.

(b) "Life of Lord Buddha" produced by Messrs. Madan Theatres, Ltd.

28. (a), (b) No.

29—30. No.

32. Yes. But consider the present censorship in Burma is rather strict, as regards Burmese Films are concerned. Members of the Board should be liberal as regards Domestic Scenes and Love affairs are concerned. If undue and unnecessary measures are taken by Censors, we are afraid, it would be detrimental to the Burmese Film Industry as a whole. Because we have a very limited amount of literature. We haven't the vast facility as enjoyed by the West and to some extent even by India. We have no Social Life in the sense it is understood and made use of by Western Civilization. We have no big Burmese Industries to supply us with some materials to base our stories upon. We have no big events happening in our Country such as, Boxing events, Swimming, Sports, etc., as is the case in West. We have no National Army or National Navy to utilize. We have no Nobilities—No Wills and Legacies of the magnitude as in other countries. We have no environs and facilities to produce Animal pictures. Besides we are not a ruling Nation to produce true historical films. So the only materials left to us to base our

film stories are love dramas, fictions and fantastic stories. If therefore liberality is not shown, it would mean gradual seceding of business. On these grounds we need censoring to be relaxed with the minimum of safeguard.

33. (a), (b), (c) Yes.

34. Our reply is in the negative.

35. (a) No. We desire 60 per cent. Non-officials and one representative of our association to be included.

(b) No.

36. (a) We have no knowledge of the present prevailing system at Bombay and Calcutta.

(b) Yes, and we consider that suitable gentlemen will be available.

37. (a) Yes.

(b) No safeguards are needed at present.

38. Yes. "Life of Lord Buddha."

39. We have no knowledge of any film.

40. No, not necessary.

42. Yes. We would like to be represented on the Board of Censors.

43. (a) No.

44. Public may assist by patronizing the industry in all its aspects and Press by favourable comments in their Papers of the industry as a whole.

45. Not necessary [to both (a) and (b).]

***Oral Evidence of the Burma Cinema Film Producers' Association,
Rangoon, on Thursday, the 19th January 1928.**

The following gentlemen were present:—

President:

U Ba Hyun, Manager, Burmese Favourite Co., Rangoon.

Members:

Y Ohn Maung, Manager, London Art Photo Co., Rangoon.

U Nyun, Manager, British Burma Film Co., Rangoon.

J. M. H. Samuels, Manager, Samuels Ltd., Rangoon.

Chairman: You belong to the London Art Photo Company?

U Ba Hyun: I am the President of the Burma Cinema Film Producers' Association.

Q. Is it an association formed of producers or exhibitors?

A. Producers.

Q. When was your association formed?

A. About two months ago.

Q. What is the number of members on the roll now?

A. About 23.

Q. Each of them representing a producing agency?

A. Yes.

Q. So there are 23 producing agencies in Rangoon?

A. Yes.

Q. All film-producing?

A. Yes.

Q. Are all of them in Rangoon itself?

A. No, three are in the districts and twenty are in Rangoon.

Q. Have you got any rules for your association? Have you framed any?

A. Yes, we have framed rules.

Q. Have you got a printed copy here?

A. No, I shall send you one.

Q. What are the objects of the association?

A. Just to increase the cinema trade and also to improve the prospects of the producing concerns.

Q. You have formed yourselves into an association in order to co-operate and assist each other?

A. Yes.

Q. You represent the London Art Photo Company?

U Ohn Maung: Yes.

U Ba Hyun: I represent the Burmese Favourite Company, and U Nyun represents the British Burma Film Company.

Mr. Samuels: I represent Samuels Limited. I would like to say, Mr. Chairman that although we have had a conversation amongst ourselves and although the President of our association will give evidence on our behalf, I should be given an opportunity to give my personal evidence.

A. Yes, we have your written statement already with us.

Q. Have you got any difficulties in your producing concerns?

U Ba Hyun: At present there is not much difficulty.

Q. You are not experiencing any difficulty in producing what you want?

A. The industry is in its infancy; but at present there is not much difficulty, I think.

Q. When was the first film produced in Burma?

A. In 1918.

Q. Who produced it?

A. The London Art Company produced it.

Q. You have been working from that date onwards without any break?

U Ohn Maung: Yes.

Q. Is it a family concern or a company with outside partners?

A. It is a family concern and there is no outside partner.

Q. Each of these 23 concerns which are members of your association is a family concern, I suppose?

A. They are mostly family concerns; but there is one limited company, that is the Samuels Limited.

Q. Have you seen Mr. Samuels' statement which he has furnished to this Committee?

A. No, I have not seen it.

Q. What about your photography? What do you do for getting good photographers?

A. Photographers are available.

Q. Do you feel that the photography needs improvement, compared with what is produced elsewhere?

A. Yes, I think it needs improvement.

Q. What do you propose to do in order to improve it?

A. If Government can help us by sending some students to train themselves in other countries with regard to acting, photography, direction, etc., I think there will be improvement.

Q. Why do you want Government help? Why don't you send your own directors, photographers and others to other countries for training?

A. Lack of finance stands in the way; we cannot afford to spend money on that.

Q. How many films have you produced yourself?

A. 11 films.

- Q. Within how many years?
 A. From 1922 onwards.
- Q. That means in the course of six years?
 A. Yes, less than 2 films a year.
- Q. How many films have you produced?
 U *Ohn Maung*: We have produced about 24 films.
- Q. What is the length of each film that you produce?
 A. On an average about 12,000 feet.
- Q. They are all stories?
 A. Yes.
- Q. Burman stories or western stories?
 A. Sometimes we copy western stories also, but that is very seldom.
- Q. Have you got good scenario writers?
 A. No.
- Q. How do you manage for scenario writing now?
 A. We do it in our own way. We have no scenario writers at all. We write our own stories.
- Q. What is the average cost per foot of production of these films?
 A. Rs. 1-4-0 to Rs. 1-8-0.
- Q. You produce 12,000 feet. What is the cost of a film generally?
 A. It comes to between Rs. 15,000 and Rs. 20,000 for each film. It also depends on the production. If the production takes six months or one year, the cost will be more.
- Q. Do you keep a permanent establishment of actors and actresses?
 A. Yes.
- Q. Then why did you produce only 11 films? Why not more?
 A. But we cannot finish them early.
- Q. How many can you produce in a year?
 A. At the most only three.
- Q. And you?
 U *Ba Hyun*: We can produce from five to six at the most in a year.
- Colonel *Crawford*: The rains interfere for some time?
 A. Yes, the weather interferes. We cannot moreover get experienced actors and actresses although we pay them.
- Chairman: You pay them monthly or by jobs?
 A. Monthly.
- Q. All of you do that?
 A. Yes, all the producers do that.
- Q. You have an association here, why can't you send the people employed here in photography and acting, etc., abroad in order to receive some education?
 A. We will have to do that, but we are not rich enough I say. We have only formed this association lately.
- Q. So that you have not yet tried it?
 A. We have had no time to try that.
- Q. Is it necessary that Government should help, when the producers themselves can do this? Why should Government spend public money on this affair?
 A. All the producers are very poor and they cannot afford to do that.
- Q. Supposing certain educational films have to be produced by Government, say on public health, agricultural implements, etc., for educational purposes, will you be able to produce them for the Government, or would you prefer them to produce such films themselves?

- A. We can produce the films for the Government if they pay a reasonable price.
- Q. What do you consider will be a reasonable price? That is for ordinary films on public health, etc.?
 A. I do not think we can produce such films as a commercial proposition. We would like to be paid about Rs. 3 for a foot.
- Q. While it costs you only Rs. 1-4-0 or Rs. 1-8-0, why do you want Rs. 3 from the Government?
 A. Sometimes we have to make up for losses. Moreover, it depends upon the kind of pictures we have to produce; for instance, for an educational film, we will have to travel throughout the districts, and it will cost us much.
- Q. You don't think you will be able to produce them for less than Rs. 3 a foot?
 A. These educational films are more difficult to produce than the ordinary ones. They require people with good brain and cleverness. Therefore the Government must pay more for them.
- Q. Does it require a different kind of acting from the ordinary acting?
 A. No.
- Q. You think you will have to employ different actors for the purpose?
 A. Yes.
- Q. Therefore it will cost you more, is that your idea?
 A. Yes.
- Q. Supposing the Government established a studio of their own in order to produce these films, employing good experts in that studio for photography, acting and direction whose services would also be lent to producers like you for teaching your men in the different arts, how would you like that?
 A. The Government can do that if they are prepared to pay handsome salaries to experts and actors.
- Q. Supposing they do that, do you think you can use the experts in the Government studio for your own purposes, i.e., for training your men?
 A. But the experts of other nations will not be able to teach our people, because the customs and habits will differ.
- Q. What is your object then in sending your students abroad? Just a while ago you said that students should be sent for training to other countries?
 A. I think it is much better than experts coming from England or America for teaching our students here. They may not know anything about the habits of our people here.
- Q. The experts can give directions and assist our men?
 A. But they cannot understand the manners and habits of the people. I do not think that will be of any use at all.
- Q. You don't require such experts even for photography?
 A. In photography perhaps we may require them, but for direction and acting, I would rather send our students abroad to learn the business themselves than have those experts here.
- Q. Whatever you produce, you are able to let out for exhibition, is it not? Is there much demand for Burmese films?
 A. The Burmese people like Burmese films; but we cannot show them at once as soon as they are finished, as we have no hall of our own. That is the chief difficulty now.
- Q. How many films are produced here in a year?
 A. On an average I produce about 3, the London Art Company, about 5, the British Burma Film Company, about 6 and other concerns about 8 or 10; altogether about 25 films a year are produced. That will be a safe estimate, I think.

- Q. Each about 12,000 feet?
- A. Yes.
- Q. All those films are shown first in Rangoon I suppose before they are sent out?
- A. Yes.
- Q. There are two theatres here which show Burmese films, is it?
- A. Generally only two, but sometimes more.
- Q. At any rate two theatres always show Burmese films every week?
- A. Yes.
- Q. Some pictures run I suppose for several weeks?
- A. Yes, they do.
- Q. You don't want to send them to the mufassal before showing them in Rangoon?
- A. No, first we show them in Rangoon in order to get a market.
- Q. Have you tried other theatres to show your films?
- A. The theatres belong to Madans. We have tried no other hall.
- Q. If you think there is a demand for Burmese films, why don't you build a hall?
- A. On account of bad finance, we are unable to do that.
- Q. But I see some gentleman is building a theatre now?
- A. Yes, one is being built.
- Q. You have two theatres for showing them and each film gets two weeks' run on an average, and about 25 films are being produced in a year?
- A. Yes; but sometimes some producers cannot afford to have a hall at the rates charged for them by Madans. Many producers cannot pay so much rent. Only three people can pay what is demanded.
- Q. Is it a fixed rent?
- A. We have to pay Rs. 175 a day for the hall.
- Q. What is the arrangement with the exhibitor?
- A. The proceeds for a good film will come to about Rs. 500 to Rs. 800 on the first day of the first week, but will gradually fall down sometimes if the film is not a good one. In some cases we cannot get even the hall rent.
- Q. So you get a percentage of the box receipts and you pay a fixed rent for each day?
- A. Sometimes some films are run on the percentage system.
- Q. Is the percentage separate, or does it include the rent?
- A. The percentage is separate. If the film is run on percentage, then there will be no rent for the hall.
- Q. What percentage of the receipts do you get?
- A. We get 70 per cent. of the receipts and the exhibitor takes 30 per cent., but the hall owner will not exhibit every film.
- Q. Then the exhibitor would not pay him? What is really your difficulty? For inferior films of course you cannot force the owner to exhibit them, because they will not be paying. You will have to pay him the rent. I suppose it is not a complaint that you are making?
- A. I think that the best thing will be to have a hall built by the Government. That will be decidedly better.
- Q. You will then pay rent to the Government, I suppose?
- A. Yes, we will pay a reasonable rent.
- Chairman: Did you try to get the hall quoted?
- A. But the hall had been taken by Madans.
- Q. Why did you not get it?
- A. We cannot pay more.

- Q. How much did you offer?
- A. We quoted Rs. 1,000 but Madans paid more. We tried to get the "King". But they are also being tried to let out to Madans. I do not know what agreement they have.
- Q. That is a feature in every trade.
- A. It is so.
- Q. But from the point of view of the Burma film Producer, should not your Corporation build a Corporation building for you? Are they not rich enough?
- A. No.
- Q. Why do you think the Government should establish a theatre rather than the local authorities? Just as they have established public paths, they might do so at reasonable terms in the case of the producers. There is nothing to prevent your Corporation from doing it. Is not your Corporation a rich one?
- A. No.
- Q. You say it is your financial difficulty. Supposing you produced a film say for Rs. 10,000 or Rs. 15,000 and you want to raise money on it, from whom do you raise the money?
- A. From the money-lender.
- Q. What interest have you to pay?
- A. We have to pay from Rs. 1-8-0 to Rs. 2 per hundred per mensem. That is a very heavy blow.
- Q. Have you not any Co-operative Society here, Co-operative Credit Societies?
- A. I don't think there is any Co-operative Society who lend money. Moreover it would be difficult to raise money on such securities.
- Q. You want banking facilities for the producers, so that you can get money easily to go on with the production of the next film instead of waiting for the profits which can only come in small amounts.
- A. Yes. At present we cannot make much profit in this line.
- Colonel Crawford: You have produced altogether 11 films at an average cost of Rs. 15,000. Well, I suppose you have got back all the money which you spent on them from the rentals and other collections?
- A. It covers it in some films and we lost in some also.
- Q. On the whole it has not been a bad concern.
- A. Not a very bad concern.
- Q. And you are getting your cost of production and also some profits, I take it. Do you borrow for your business yourself?
- A. Yes.
- Q. At what rate of interest?
- A. At Rs. 1-8-0.
- Q. So that on the capital you are paying at the rate of Rs. 1-8-0. Is that the same in the other concerns?
- A. Most of them are like that.
- Q. Then you cannot afford to spend more in making your pictures more productive?
- A. No.
- Q. Supposing you employ a good photographer, a Director, a story writer, and all that and make your films up to the standard of the western film.
- A. On account of want of finance we cannot do it.
- Q. Supposing you increase the cost of production from Rs. 15,000 to Rs. 25,000 on an average, do you think you will be able to make a profit. You will attract a larger crowd.
- A. I think we can make a profit.

Q. The field in Burma is very limited.

A. We cannot send out our films to India.

Chairman: You never tried your picture in India with Indian vernacular titles.

A. We have never tried it. It takes time to translate and we cannot afford to waste time. It is additional expense to us.

Q. How do you waste time and how is it an extra cost?

A. If we send the film out to India we are not sure we will make a business out of it and we are afraid to send them out.

Q. Supposing there is a good Indian film, would you like to see it?

A. We do not like to see it on account of nationality and other things.

Q. You care to see the western films, why is it? And you do not see the Chinese films? Why?

A. The Burman people do not care to see the Chinese films because they do not appeal to them.

Q. What is there peculiar in the story, for instance which I saw the other day the story of the "Blind Son". What is there peculiar in this Burman story? I appreciated it.

A. That was produced at our company. I don't know what the peculiarity is.

Q. I have noticed a peculiarity in Rangoon. Here the Indians like the Indian films, the Burmans the Burmese films and the Chinaman his, and all like the western ones. Why is it?

A. The western films are universal ones. They are universal to all.

Q. I want to know the reasons for my own personal information. I want to know the psychological thing about it.

A. Everyone likes to see his own people and his own surroundings. Our films would not appeal to others, on account of the nature of the subject matter and it would not have a market in the west because they are accustomed to their own needs. Our films have not come up to their standard.

Q. So as producers you do not, except the financial difficulty and technical scholarships which you advocate may be given to students, need any other assistance from the Government or from public bodies.

A. The main thing is finance.

Q. So you want facilities for finance.

A. Yes. Actors may be found in Burma but without finance we would not be able to make a better film.

Q. What is the largest pay you give to an actor?

A. Rs. 250 to Rs. 300 per mensem.

Q. And to an actress?

A. About the same pay if they are good people.

Q. And the least pay?

A. Rs. 50.

Q. Even for the ordinary man?

A. Yes.

Q. Now I do not suppose you get your accounts audited; you do not prepare the balance sheets for your business.

A. Yes; we do for the sake of income-tax.

Q. You do prepare balance sheets. If you have no objection, could you give us the balance-sheet, in confidence. We would not allow them to be used by others. You can send them in sealed cover to us.

A. Yes; we can.

Q. If you will send us these, they will be useful for us and they will be kept strictly confidential even from the income-tax people.

A. Yes.

Q. Now about the life of Buddha shown here some years ago. Had you any objection to that film?

A. Yes from the point of view of religion.

Q. What was the objection?

A. There is in our doctrine a form of Buddha and it is a supernatural figure. The figures in the films cannot be made equal to that form.

Q. So you mean to say that no Burman producer can depict the Life of Buddha.

A. There are some forms of Buddha depicted on the film, but they are all about his life as a Prince and so forth.

Q. Not after he became a Buddha?

A. We cannot make it; every Burman will object to it.

Q. You show the life of Buddha in puppet shows. How do you do that?

A. It is a national institution. In the shows they show only the image of Buddha but the Burman idea is that man should not take the place of Buddha. That is the main objection.

Q. Well I sympathise with it.

Q. I believe they say you are copying western films.

A. Yes; sometimes in producing.

Q. What is it you are obliged to copy. Is there anything which you want to copy to attract your audience?

A. We cannot make a story as it will take time and it is all easy to copy a story from some western story to meet the circumstances of the case.

Q. And thus save yourself the trouble?

A. Yes.

Q. Is there a tendency to copy any of the western ways of production in the matter of the relation of the sexes, men and women and all that?

A. No.

Q. You try to imitate what your Burmese people appreciate.

A. Yes.

Q. Which of you produced the Public Health films here. I think Mr. Samuels.

A. Yes.

Q. And the Wembley Exhibits. Mr. Samuels you did them?

A. Yes.

Q. What did you charge for that?

A. Rs. 2-2-0 per feet.

Q. And you gave the negative also?

A. Yes.

Q. And I suppose the charge is the same.

A. I think so.

Q. Had you any difficulty in producing those films. They gave you the instructions. In respect of forest, teak, rice and cotton?

A. Yes they gave us the instructions and we produced the films. We went to the forest at different seasons and in that way we produced the different exhibits.

Q. This Rs. 2-2-0 covers all expenses. Even your going to the spot or did they pay you separately for that?

A. It covers all expenses.

Colonel Crawford: You say that the present cost of your production varies from Rs. 15,000 to Rs. 20,000. How many cinemas have you got in Burma?

A. Over 60.

65 I understand.

Q. You say the market is small. There are only 65 cinemas open to you. Do you show the films in all of them?

A. No.

Q. That cuts it down further?

A. Yes; we can show the films in only 35 or 40 cinemas.

Chairman: Of which only 2 are in town and the rest are outside?

A. Yes.

Q. What is the sort of return per night that you get per picture, taking an average picture?

A. About Rs. 300 a day. This is for an average film only in Rangoon.

Q. The other day when we went to the Dagon Theatre I think they said the collection was only Rs. 87. A Burmese film was shown then.

A. That is only for one performance.

Q. This Rs. 300 is your share of the profit, the producers share?

A. No. Our's will be about 1/3 or about Rs. 200. Then we have got to pay the hall rent. Some producers are losing I notice.

Q. I want to find taking the cost of production to be Rs. 15,000 the return you hope to get on a film like that.

A. Rs. 20,000 or Rs. 30,000 will be the maximum return.

Q. You cannot afford to spend very much more on production.

A. No.

Q. Then the profit would disappear.

A. That is the difficulty.

Q. You can go on producing films of a certain quality so long as you do not exceed between Rs. 15,000 and Rs. 20,000.

Q. What is the most costly film that you have produced.

A. The film took about 2 years to finish and it cost us Rs. 40,000.

A. Yes.

Q. That is the only costly film you have produced.

A. Yes.

Colonel Crawford: Has it covered your cost of production yet?

A. Yes; it has just covered.

Q. You have not got your profit yet?

A. No.

Q. What could you do to increase your market, I mean to expand your market so that you can get more money. Will Burma stand more cinemas?

A. In all the villages and towns if they have more cinemas we should get more money.

Q. In what size of towns could you start a cinema?

A. Towns like Pegu, and Prome will be able to do it.

A. 50,000 population would be required.

Q. What number would go to the cinema house, and see it? Nearly all of them?

A. Not all at present.

Chairman: You suggested going to the village. Suppose you made the rate of admission 2 annas and 4 annas and go from village to village as you do in the case of the travelling cinemas. What amount would you get?

A. About Rs. 150 or Rs. 100 for each picture.

Colonel Crawford: Well would it be possible for you different producers to combine and open up a circuit of theatres to market your films?

A. We have no capital to do so.

Q. If you want to build theatres, that would mean additional cost?

A. That is the whole thing, finance.

Q. If there is a profit to be made in this business you have to get more theatres. Could you form yourselves into a company?

A. This industry is not an easy one as to make it a successful business proposition. The point is it is difficult to make a good film.

Q. To market your films, to exhibit your films you have to get into touch with the theatre owners, don't you? Like Madans on the Globe. Have you ever thought of making arrangements with theatre owners elsewhere in the world?

A. I don't understand it.

Q. You imagine that your pictures would not be popular elsewhere. America produces pictures for any part of the world and their pictures are shown all over the world, and there is no reason why you should not produce western films in Burma. You can also get into touch with theatre owners in England and Germany and so on. If you produce any such picture you can show it in England and Germany. Have you ever thought of doing any such thing? Do you think it would not be of any good?

A. No.

Q. Could not the two people combine together, the English producer and the Burman producer. The Burman knows the country and can give the necessary instructions to the Englishman in producing a particular picture and this can be shown not only in Burma but also in India, England, Germany and on the Continent. Is that not a possibility.

A. Yes; it could be done.

Q. That is the line on which you should develop?

A. Yes.

Q. Regarding the training of your personnel, you told the Chairman that you are in favour of sending your Directors, your scenario writers and your actors to England. The Government might provide scholarships to send them to Germany or England or America to learn. That would mean you cannot send very many men. You might get one scholarship a year. If Government is producing its educational films and employs the very latest directors and scenario writers for its own work, can't you send your men, say 10 or 15, to the Government studio to see how they do it and there get their training.

A. Yes. I think we can.

Q. Is this not a better method than sending one man to England or Germany. I am trying to find out what you want. Some American or European Director may come to Burma to teach the Burmese people the technique of photography, the technique of lighting and the technique of directing, continuity, caption writing, scenario writing and he can produce a film according to Burman requirements.

A. Yes, I think this can be done.

Q. The suggestion is that the Government studio would be absolutely upto date in all its machinery and in its methods.

A. That would be useful.

Q. You think it might be useful to send your men to learn in the upto date studio of Government intended for the purpose of taking their educational pictures but not for competing with you.

A. Yes.

Q. Would you like to set up a studio that you can yourself go and utilise?

A. My studio is only an ordinary one.

Q. Supposing you had a studio like the Government studio and it had no educational work to do, the directors and everybody were free and you could hire that studio for the production of your pictures, would it be of assistance to you, with all its electric lighting?

A. That would be of assistance.

Q. In Germany they have such studios. I suppose something of that sort would be of assistance to you?

A. Yes.

Colonel Crawford: You can only produce films at certain times of the year I suppose?

A. Yes, from October to June we can produce films.

Q. And for the rest of the year you have to shut down your studios?

A. Yes.

Q. I understand you have arc lamps and I think you can take pictures in the rains?

A. Yes.

Q. Last year did you produce pictures in the rains?

A. No, we started it only about 3 months ago. We have not completed the installation yet.

Q. Is there sufficient current in Rangoon to provide for the production properly?

A. Yes.

Mr. Green: You told us that if you are quoting for Government work you would have to quote between 2 to 3 rupees a foot. I take it that includes your profit, you can produce your films cheaper than that?

A. No, we are not able to make much profit.

Q. Why do you charge Government more than your usual rate? You told us that for your entertainment films cost you only about Rs. 2?

A. We have to charge a higher rate because we have to stop our own business if we take up Government propaganda films, and we will have to meet extra expenses.

Q. And you are satisfied you can use your own time to advantage in making your own films?

A. If we can make a profit we can do so.

Mr. Neogy: Do you think that if Government want to patronise you by trusting their work to you, instead of having a producing centre of their own, that would create better confidence in the financial market and enable you to attract more capital to your industry?

A. We have great financial difficulties.

Q. Supposing you were in a position to say to the public that your company will not merely manufacture the entertainment films of the usual kind but also will manufacture propaganda films wanted by Government, for which Government were prepared to give you orders, would that fact enable you to attract capital more easily?

A. I don't much believe in that. At present the business is not paying much.

Q. How do you then ever propose to attract capital to your business if you propose to float a company?

A. At present we cannot float a company.

Q. Have you ever tried to secure any loan for any of your concerns from the prominent banking Houses in Rangoon?

A. No, because we don't think we will get it, our credit is not sufficiently high in the financial market.

Q. Would that credit be in any way enhanced by the fact that you were entrusted with a certain amount of Government work?

A. If that is so we will be able to get some loans from the bank.

Q. Supposing Government gave you an order, to that extent the Banking Houses in Rangoon might come forward to assist you, I suppose?

A. Yes, we think so.

Q. I suppose you have not fully considered this aspect of the question?

Chairman: It is very problematic.

Mr. Neogy: I take it there is a considerable market in Burma for the films of the type that you have been producing, is it not so?

A. We want more theatres.

Q. Do you think that the quality of the pictures does not appeal to the Burmese audience?

A. Not yet sufficiently. If we could make better films, possibly they would be better appreciated.

Q. What class of people generally visit your Burmese films?

A. Generally middle class Burmans visit our cinemas. Very few Europeans, some Indians and Chinese also sometimes visit Burmese pictures.

Q. What classes do they belong to, educated classes?

A. Very few educated classes come.

Q. Do the educated classes prefer western films?

A. Yes, they generally do, but very few attend cinemas.

Q. Is your time fully occupied with the productions that you make every year? Have you any spare time during which you could do any outside work?

A. All our time is spent on the business although we could produce only about 2 films every year. We work every day and during rains we prepare settings, stories, etc.

Q. Therefore, you will have no time to do Government work unless Government would pay handsomely?

A. Yes.

Q. Where were your cameramen trained?

A. They had no practical training. What they studied from books, they experimented on with the camera.

Q. How many cameramen of distinction are there in Burma?

A. There are lots of them here but they are not experts. I can say there is only one well qualified cameraman in Burma and that is U Chn Maung (a witness).

Q. Do you think that you will stand to benefit by going to foreign countries?

A. Yes, certainly.

Q. Now it has been suggested that if the Government were to have a studio of their own, that in itself would provide a training ground for apprentices. Is that so?

A. Yes, it would be suitable.

Q. Will the production of Government films such, as a paddy farm picture or a film depicting the forest wealth of Burma, enable you, to pick up sufficient knowledge of direction or acting which would help you in the production of entertainment films such as Romances, serials or dramas?

A. I suppose it would.

Q. Now, you said you are trying to instal arc lamps in your studios. Have you any experience of arc lighting?

A. No, we have no experience. There also we are going to experiment.

Q. Have you made any experiments at all?

A. Yes we have produced pictures with the aid of arc lamps in some places with better results, e.g., where jewellery costumes are to be shown, etc.

Q. Have those pictures taken with the arc lamps been shown in Rangoon?

A. Yes, some have been shown already.

Q. Was there any marked difference between the quality of pictures taken with the arc lamps and in the ordinary way?

A. From the photographic point of view there is some difference, rather an improvement with the arc lamps. Of course, that is not the idea of the public.

Q. So the difference is not apparent to the public?

A. The audience will gradually understand the difference

Q. Unless a man had some technical experience of photography, he would find it difficult to make a distinction between production made with an arc lamp and a production made in the ordinary manner, I suppose?

A. More or less it is so.

U Ba Hlyn: Mr. Chairman, I have to make a complaint to you about the censorship that is now in vogue in Rangoon. Censorship here is very strict and it has a great deterrent effect upon our Burman productions. They interfere with our plot and give us much trouble. In love scenes especially, they have given us a warning that man and woman should not touch each other or embrace one another.

Chairman: We have been told that touching or embracing in public is against Burman morality?

A. Why do they allow western films to show all those things. After all, it is only amusement. No realities are depicted in these films, and the public knows full well that it is only an amusement.

Q. You want to adopt something which is different from Burman habits although it is not to the Burman taste?

A. Film producers in Burma are very careful and they don't include a single objectionable scene in their productions such as are commonly seen in the western films. You yourself have witnessed some of our Burmese films.

Colonel Crawford: Do the Censors treat the Burmese films differently from the Western films?

A. Yes, they do, in English films they allow all kissing and other scenes, but they don't permit such things in our productions. They simply cut them out.

Chairman: Supposing you show a film showing kissing of a Burmese girl by a Burman Indian or an European, will not a Burman audience resent it?

A. We think that the audience will not mind it at all. Only the censors object to that. They are very unreasonable.

Q. Will not the Burman audience resent the sight of a Burmese girl being kissed by a white man?

A. In our opinion there is nothing objectionable in that at all.

Q. Supposing the audience get angry?

A. They won't get angry. You know they go and see the Western films and they don't object to those things at all. Among Burmans they don't kiss each other, but they only smell. They simply bring their faces near but they don't kiss as we do. Without touching each other we cannot construct a story at all. That is our grievance against the Burma Board of Film censors.

Q. All right. Thank you very much.

Written Statement of Mr. J. M. H. Samuels, Manager, Samuels, Ltd.,
Rangoon.

GENERAL.

2. This question is more for India than Burma, where 90 per cent. of the people are literate in their own Language. We would answer this question.

(a) In the western film exhibition halls. The educated (English) class predominates as against unenglish educated class—whereas in the

(b) Burmese film cinema exhibition hall the middle and working class predominates. These are the city aspect; in the districts—the majority are working classes and it is on the increase.

(b) This is difficult to gauge—in 8 annas and 4 annas classes Indians and Burmans predominates, if it is a first class sensational feature subject.

(c) Burmese families have the tendency of taking all their children to the cinema shows, we would put down to 20 per cent.

PART I.

3. At present the Burmans prefer the Burmese films, if English or Western films first class serials are appreciated by the younger generation—if a first class feature like "Thief of Bagdad" every caste or creed go to see it—otherwise the Burmans prefer their own productions.

4. The exhibitors cannot cater adequately for such cosmopolitan crowds as there are in Burma. What the Burmans and Indian would like the Europeans do not.

4. Yes.

(a) With few exceptions they are.

(b) Yes.

(c) For the Burmese audience it is more profitable to show a good Burmese film when we say good (the dictum of the public that they like it).

(d) We have many—but one will do. "Mya Tha Bet" which ran for 5 weeks—if a film has made it's name in Burma—the Burmans go and see them—3 or 5 times the same picture during one or repeat runs.

6. Yes.

(b) The National Literature if well depicted.

(1) More so.

(2) A mixed picture—nationalism and here acting.

7. We have no such class to cater for.

8. No.

9. (a) The 1st is to get the assistance of the vernacular papers. The 2nd is Government and for educating boys with stipend in professional cinematography—in Burma or elsewhere west.

9. Yes. Prices are reasonable—there is no difficulty in this matter. There is no monopoly.

10. We have no such booking in this country. Except the tendency of district exhibitors being compelled to accept at certain lower rates all the pictures or those following of one producer—the exhibitor is not bound in any way not to exhibit the picture of other producers.

11. They generally come over to see the pictures when it is exhibited in the halls or if they are far away they depute some of their relatives to view the pictures for them—at present if a picture is proved successful in Rangoon—they are well booked for all over Burma, if a failure in Rangoon even though a good picture—no exhibitor comes forward to book for the districts.

12. We have none here.

13. The question of Tariff is so wide that it is very difficult to suggest any particular materials—the main item is raw film, these in the majority are imported from Calcutta or Bombay there being very little direct importation from Europe.

14. Undoubtedly. There is need for it.

15. Yes. The class and quality of pictures that are being daily turned out goes to show that the film industry in Burma has come to stay and would outbeat many of the best Eastern productions in the near future.

16. No, we have not. We need.

(1) Scenario writers.

(2) Actresses.

(3) Technical knowledge.

The reply to 1st is technical class. The reply to 3rd is same. The reply to 2nd is the national awakening of the people themselves to the tremendous power of the cinema, fostered by the vernacular papers which are now perfectly apathetic to the industry or its need—the awakening of the educated (English) class or Burmese women, that it is in no way derogatory to their class or dignity to be a cinema actress—the prejudice against acting on stage in any form is still considered by the Burmese as derogatory. Education in future might do much, but to teach them is the duty of the vernacular papers of the country—unless they get up from their sleep. The industry must remain where it is for many many years to come in spite of its quality in picture.

17. The Burman merchant class would rather invest in an 100 basket of paddy than in a cinema industry—with the exception of few the majority of the producers are having a precarious existence—all for need of capital.

18. It is rather difficult to suggest in what way Government could help the industry either administrative or legislative, except in the advancement of facilities of technical knowledge by a Technical School—by sending boys to America or England to learn the art in its latest method—by calling a conference of the newspaper men and asking them to take up the question seriously for the good of the country. At present though the industry is in its infancy at least 20 to 30 lakhs of money are kept and circulated in the country.

19. The cost of production is cheaper here than in India.

20. (a) The cost of expenditure to Government is infinitesimal in comparison to the good it would do to the country by fostering a vast industry.

(b) From provincial revenue.

21. The foregoing suggestions are all that we at present need in this country. State agency would be looked upon as interfering with private rights.

Films of the British Commonwealth.

22. (a), (b), (c) Yes.

(a) Already explained in previous chapter (18).

(b) Trade Commissioner taking an interest in the production of this country—introducing same to suitable market in their centre.

(c) This can only be effected by stricter censor.

23. (a) The possibilities are great—we have in this country great staple industries which could be exploited and introduced to the foreign countries by cinema films.

PART II.

Social Aspects and Control.

24. (a) Yes.

(b) Immoral there is not but criminally suggestive there is.

(c) Criminally suggestive is more harmful to the youth.

It suggests to an impulsive race method of offence and criminal tendencies

(d) (1) Sex film—Censorship is adequate. Crime film—Censorship is not adequate.

(c) We are not able to say this.

25. Certainly it does.

26. (a) Yes.

(b) The Life of Buddha was shown here and withdrawn.

27. (a) Good many films shown here has the tendency to misrepresent the western civilisation and lower it in the eyes of the eastern natives—the people here are sufficiently intelligent to understand the western film—though the subtitles are in English—our suggestion is stricter censorship.

28. Immoral films shown to children must have evil effect on children more so on boys—the sensuous films—films with women half naked with low cut bodies.

(2) Such films lead to many abuse.

29—30. No, we are not.

31. (a) The only sure method.

32. Perfectly satisfactory.

33. (a) No.

(b) Yes.

(c) It would to a certain extent.

34. No.

35. (a) Yes, quite satisfactory.

(b) This would certainly be an advantage.

36. (a) Yes. Gentlemen are available who are prepared to devote their time to the board.

37. (a) Yes. Films passed in India were totally or partially censored here with effect.

(b) No, none.

38. Yes, Life of Lord Buddha shown in India, and withdrawn in Burma.

40. Yes, some of them half nude women of western pictures these are rather suggestive to what you are likely to see when entering the Hall—it would be no hardship to censor these.

41. Our Burmese pictures have more or less a tendency of improving in moral standard.

42. Yes, we would like to be represented on the board.

44. If bad—by its condemnation and forcing the hand of the authority to withdraw such film from exhibition.

45. (a) No. Not necessary.

(b) No. Not necessary as yet.

Oral Evidence of Mr. J. M. H. SAMUELS, Manager, Samuels, Ltd., Rangoon, on Thursday, the 19th January 1928.

Chairman: Now you say that the tastes of each section of the community are different?

A. Yes.

Q. It is a very marked feature here? What the Burmese and Indians would like the Europeans would not?

A. It is so.

Q. Have you travelled abroad?

A. I have not been to the West.

Q. Do you think there is any chance of the Burmese films produced under the best circumstances having a market in, say, England or other countries?

A. Yes.

Q. If good films are produced you think you will be able to get a market there?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you mean to say dealing with the Burmese subjects?

A. Yes. Dealing with them but not enlarging them as we do here for the Burmese audience. If we attempt to make a special Burmese film for the West I think that would be able to satisfy the Western people to a certain extent.

Q. Will you be able to satisfy the Burmese people with that?

A. No, not with that.

Q. So you want two different things?

A. Yes.

Q. What you produce for Burma will not be acceptable to the West and what you produce for the West will not be acceptable for Burma?

A. Yes. In Burmese films, to give satisfaction to the audience, you put the cart before the horse, that is to say, you explain to them the story by a sub-title. They love to read the title better than they do to see the picture. The result is that for nearly every 10 feet there is a sub-title. But in the case of Western films that might be given at an interval of 100 or 200 feet. Here there are a continuous series of sub-titles explaining the story. For this reason if you make a picture for the West or India you have got to make some difference.

Q. So that it is not a case of extending a market but creating a new market for new goods if attempted in that direction?

A. Yes, it is so.

Q. If it is done how would it help the Burmese industry?

A. Why not? By producing such films you bring money to Burma. We will make the pictures here. Instead of making it 10,000 feet we cut it down to 4,000 or 5,000 feet. By giving sufficient sub-titles we make it acceptable to the Western market and bring the money to our country.

Q. That can only be done by some agreement with the exhibitors?

A. Yes.

Q. Will you take that risk?

A. Yes, I can.

Q. You have not tried it?

A. I have made an attempt. I have cut down a film in English, I mean a Burman film, from 12,000 feet to about 6,000. I have made an agreement to send it to India as an experiment. I intend sending it to the West, say America, I do that for this reason that it is a historical picture with good scenery and with interesting incidents. Also it represents real life.

Q. You are going to try that?

A. Yes, in future I have an intention to make an attempt.

Q. How many films have you produced yourself?

A. 9 films altogether.

Q. In how many years?

A. In 5 years' time.

Q. Did all of them pay you?

A. No. There are several reasons for that. Firstly I have struck out a different line altogether from my friends. I have represented Burmese life as it actually was, that is to say in a pure and simple way. I had been true to history. I have failed in some and I have succeeded in others.

Q. In the 9 films you have produced in how many you succeeded?

A. Only in 2 and in the others I have recovered my cost in some and entirely lost the whole in some others. In the last film I have produced I have lost entirely.

Q. What was the reason?

A. The reason is this: I am accused by the Burmans in this respect. They say that they become frozen when seeing my film. That is because I try to depict the true life and simple life according to history. The present day Burmans do not like this and they want heroes, excitement, etc.

Q. That shows one has to be careful in producing merely real life?

A. Yes, very careful. When I went to history I had to bring in all sorts of old things with the result that my pictures have been subjected at various times to criticisms.

Q. Apart from criticisms by probably your counter-producers do the public appreciate it?

A. Yes. But they have not appreciated this film. In the two other pictures which, I said, I have been successful, they are 4 years' and 3½ years' old and they are still going out every day and each of them will go out for another 10 years.

Q. What are they?

A. They are historical pictures.

Q. People raise no objection to that.

A. No, they are very popular.

Q. In that case there must be something different in them?

A. Yes altogether different. It all depends on whether they like them or not.

Q. So on the whole it is a net loss to you?

A. It is a dead loss. In fact I am now at present stumped after I made my last picture.

Q. How much did you spend on that picture including all overhead charges?

A. It has cost me Rs. 20,000. But excluding the overhead charges the cost did not exceed Rs. 10,000 in my case.

Mr. Green: What is the length?

A. 10 to 12 thousand feet.

Chairman: Do you experience the same difficulty in finding theatres for exhibiting your pictures?

A. Not in the least. In fact we have been apprehensive of late about Madans taking over all the various halls in Rangoon. We naturally were suspicious as to their object in monopolising every hall. Yet I will say this. I showed my picture last November or so at a cheaper rate at their hall and got better treatment than I had been ever received from other hall-keepers. We used to pay Rs. 150 to the hall-keeper and we keep our own gate-keepers, ticket-sellers, Manager and others. That means to say it would cost us some money to pay these. Whereas Madans charged Rs. 150 and they gave us their Manager, their assistant, their hall-keeper, ticket-checker, they did everything and handed over the money to us. Through their management much waste of money was prevented. In spite of our suspicion I cannot say at present that they have any ulterior motive.

Q. Perhaps they are extending their business by taking over the halls.

A. I have been very well treated I can say nothing more than that.

Q. What do you think should be done by Government to encourage this industry?

A. I have already suggested. Do you want me to speak from the technical side or from the financial side?

Q. From both sides.

A. As regards the technical side I am in favour of boys being sent out to the West to learn the art as much as they can. There is some difficulty where scenario writing comes in. I would put it to you like this. The scenario say is written in Calcutta by an Indian (say a Bengal Indian). He puts in his sub-titles in Calcutta Hindustani to suit them. The same will not be appreciated by a Lucknow man. You train a boy to write scenario. He would know all the technical side of it and he will put so many footage, etc. But when it comes to the question of writing sub-titles he is out. He does not know Burmese sufficiently to write the sub-titles. It is absolutely an art. How are you going to get over this difficulty? How to write the sub-titles of that scenario? And the men who will write these sub-titles are not literate in the sense that we would understand from a European standpoint. But they are fluent Burmese writers. I have a considerable knowledge of these things because I am an old Burma man. My father came to Mandalay during King Mindon's reign, I was myself here all the time during King Thibaw's reign. Regarding the other side, namely the financial side, I really cannot suggest how Government could help. I am certainly not financially able to produce films as I ought to. Yet I should not mind having an overdraft at my bank.

ers. But I should not like to borrow money from Government, effecting a mortgage or anything like that. Supposing they give Rs. 25,000 to-morrow. I have made a film. A film is more speculative than rice or jute or anything. We don't know how the public are going to receive it. It might totally fail. In that case how to repay the money to Government? So I think the only way in which Government could help us is by giving us work.

Q. But how many of you can get work? There are about 20 or 23 of you now. Each of you cannot get work.

A. Out of the 4 leading workmen of this country that are present here now the London Art Co. is the only one engaged in outside dramas besides myself. The rest of them have kept entirely to their own dramatic productions. I think Government can do a lot by helping us, not only by giving us work but also paying us according to what we deserve to get for our labour. Certainly not the price that we have been getting.

Q. How much were you getting?

A. We were getting Rs. 2, 2-8-0 and in many instances it has come down to Re. 1-0-0 and Rs. 1-8-0 with me. I have said nothing because the heads of the department have my sympathy. It is the policy of the Government that is at fault.

Q. You want more?

A. I have made 8 films altogether. I have made a police recruitment film. It was a very successful film and it has saved to Government tens of thousands of rupees because the recruitment was done in quick short time and brought in the best men. Some years ago I did a child welfare and maternity film. This film was shown at the big pagoda and lectures were delivered by Dr. Ba Yin when thousands of people were shown how to keep themselves clean and about other hygienic principles. The film also had a maternity section. Latterly the health film was shown. Almost everybody was quite satisfied with the health film.

Q. If the Government were to give work to the producers will there not be keen competition? The Government will ask for tenders to supply a film and each man in order to get the order himself will quote low quotations.

A. Exactly this is how the rates were brought down. I should consider that it is a mistaken policy. The Government ought to select good producers and pay according to their merit. Government ought to pay according to the quality of work done. There are 4 or 5 good producers. It is entirely for the Government to decide as to the capability of such producers and select really capable men. They should also take into consideration what amount of work—good work—one has already done.

Q. You want Government to pay a higher rate to you even though they can otherwise in their own studio get at a lower rate simply to help a private enterprise? Do you advocate this policy?

A. Yes. In a Government studio your overhead charges will be say about Rs. 50,000 a year. If you keep a first class camera man he will ask a hundred pounds at least. Nothing below that can bring him to this country. There are other charges also and they can be estimated at Rs. 50,000. You can pay us that amount and we will do that work for you.

Q. But in that case where is the guarantee that the work will be turned out?

A. We can give that guarantee. We don't want any camera man. We are sufficiently clever enough in our work. I have been a professional worker for the past 37 years. I know the light and shades on all human faces. In other films connected with agriculture science or anything else all you have got to do is to give us a technical supervisor. If there is an agricultural picture wanted I will go to Mandalay to see the Principal of the Agricultural College, under whose instructions one can produce good agricultural films.

Q. How would that help you?

A. That means extra money to me.

Q. Do you think it will give you a reputation at all?

A. Reputation is nothing at all.

Q. You need only money?

A. We need finance here very badly. And we want it by doing legitimate work and not by borrowing.

Q. What is this suggestion of yours that there should be a calling of conference of newspapermen?

A. The Burman vernacular papers are completely indifferent about the cinema. They have no interest at all. The result is that the public is not trained either to come and work in this line or to appreciate the beauty of their own country and also the customs and manners of their own people. Unless and until these vernacular papers teach the people the good results of cinema works would still be far behind.

Q. You want advertisement?

A. We can pay for our advertisements. But we want intelligent interest by the Press.

Q. You say that there is no immoral film in circulation but there are criminally suggestive films in circulation?

A. Yes, Western films.

Q. Many of them now?

A. Not many now. Since our censors have been at work in this direction there are not many now. Sometimes a picture comes where an Egyptian dancing woman is shown. It is nothing for the European audience but yet either an Indian or a Burman will take it from a different view point which is certainly not to the credit of the western women. I certainly don't like such films to be shown in this country.

Q. There is nothing immoral about it?

A. Nothing immoral from your point of view or mine. But they are apt to be misunderstood.

Q. What is the remedy for it? You yourself have got your own realistic experience of having tried to conform to reality.

A. Yes.

Q. We have to tolerate such films just as we tolerate the opera girls on the stage.

A. Yes.

Mr. Green: On the question of a possible market for films made in Burma you consider that the present market is a small one?

A. Yes, very small, the reason being that Burmese like to see films on Burmese subjects only and they also think that other people do not want to see Burmese subjects.

Q. Has not any one sent to India any of the Burmese pictures?

A. Not to my knowledge.

Q. But your answer to our questionnaire suggests that there are certain pictures which have a universal appeal?

A. You talk about the first class pictures like the "Thief of Baghdad." Every caste or creed goes to see that.

Q. We have been told about the same throughout India.

A. That was a film that appealed to every class and was the most popular film.

Col. Crawford: Why is it necessary to consider that the market for Burman films must be restricted to Burma only?

A. Because as I explained first we lengthen our pictures considerably in Burma which is not a desirable thing from outside point of view. The next point is the present condition of the industry and the quality of the actors and actresses which could not produce films like the Thief of Baghdad. The Burmese actresses are quite wooden for the Europeans. There are some good actors but not actresses. Regarding the standard, they are slow in their movements.

Mr. Green: In answer to question No. 15 you have said that the class and quality of pictures that are being daily turned out goes to show that the film industry in Burma has come to stay and will beat many of the best Eastern production in the near future?

A. Because I go regularly to see the Indian films just to have an idea as to how far they are good in comparison with our productions.

Q. Are you satisfied that the Burma industry has come to stay?

A. Yes.

Q. Despite your limited market?

A. In spite of that.

Q. It has been pointed out that there are only 65 cinemas in Burma and that any one film could not be shown in more than 35. Is it possible to improve your pictures when your market is so very limited?

A. You mean the home market or outside market?

Q. The home market.

A. What do you mean improvement?

Q. Improvement in any way.

Q. That is a question of the future?

A. It is a question of the future and of to-day.

Q. You are not satisfied with the actors?

A. I am not at all satisfied with the actors.

Q. Are they going to improve at an early date?

A. I do not think so.

Q. Supposing you had got a really good director, i.e., a man who does the stage-managing, do you think you could improve the acting then?

A. You mean a Burman director or an European director?

Q. I do not know if there are any qualified Burman directors. I refer to a director with acknowledged ability of whatever nationality, who would work in conjunction with the Burman certainly for Burman objects?

A. No other nationality can direct a Burman film. At any rate I can't do it.

Q. An expert American gentleman told us that the success of a film star depended to at least 90 per cent. on the possession of a film face, because any good director could get sufficient out of every actor and actress, even of ordinary intelligence, by telling them what to do. That is why I ask you whether you have not thought of having a skilled director?

A. I will explain to you a little more clearly my own experience. I made the first film, and I was the camera man and directed the film to the best of my knowledge and ability and I totally failed in spite of my knowledge of Burmans and Burmese life and having been born and bred up here and having played marbles in the streets. I am told by the Burmans that I do not know their ways,—how to direct their pictures. I admit that fact to-day. I made a second picture, the famous picture called Pada Sari. I made good money out of that and it is still going strong. I maintain this that it does not matter how clever a director is, he may understand the film, but he will never be able to get over the difficulties of the Burman ways and habits.

Q. Are you aware that actors and actresses are from every conceivable nationality?

A. Yes.

Q. And yet they can be directed?

A. They can be directed, but they will not be directed correctly. That is the difficulty that I have found, and to-day I am not a director.

Q. The directing, just like stage-managing, is a particular kind of activity which seems to me to be largely, if not entirely, absent in this province. And without it you would never be able seriously to improve. I am not concerned with the question why the film has not improved; I only wanted

to know whether you could improve the film without spending more money?

A. As time goes on, the productions can be improved.

Q. But how could that be?

A. It will be possible if our boys are sent home to undergo training there.

Q. What are they to be trained in?

A. They are to be trained in everything.

Q. Including acting?

A. There is no necessity for training in acting.

Q. Directing?

A. Well, if he can look on, certainly yes. He can learn something there surely.

Chairman: You mean by seeing people actually being directed?

A. Yes, the Burmans are really very artistic and they are very quick in grasping things; but they want to see things for themselves. If you tell them, it is no use. By seeing the things themselves, they can do a lot I think.

Mr. Green: In answer to questions 34 and 35, you say you do not want a central board but you consider that it would be an advantage to have paid censors with an advisory board? Question 35 (b) is: "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" and your reply is "this would certainly be an advantage."

A. I am sorry I have given away my papers.

Q. That does not matter. But you are satisfied with the present Board?

A. Yes, we are perfectly satisfied.

Q. I take it you would equally be satisfied, if it be financially possible, to have stipendiary whole-time censors subject to an advisory board?

A. But it is not necessary.

Q. But then why do you say it would be an advantage?

A. Possibly I did not understand the question there.

Q. You were suggesting that Government should give work to producing companies and should pay for results by merit?

A. I did not say 'by merit'. I only say that we deserve to be paid for our labour.

Q. You said 'to be paid by results' if I have taken you correctly. I suppose you mean by the quality of the work?

A. Yes, by the quality of the work.

Q. Are you ready to go on to the conclusion that if the work is not good, you should receive reduced rates?

A. What do you mean by 'not good'?

Q. The opposite of what you mean by 'good'.

A. I will explain. To make a drama, you require light and shade, studios and various other things which are not necessary for propaganda work. What you want in propaganda work is to bring out the principal points of interest which that particular propaganda wants to force into the public mind.

Q. There must be a certain amount of similitude and interest?

A. All you require is the art of exposure, correct exposure, correct printing, correct results on the screen, etc. We can do that I think.

Q. And nothing more is needed?

A. What more?

Q. I think any publicity officer will tell you what more is wanted. It is only on the technical side that you claim that, I think?

A. The word 'technical' is rather broad. I take the word 'technical' in this sense, that I take a picture, and I give you a correct negative, fully exposed and a good print.

Col. Crawford: Would I be right in putting this: Just as you go to a Bond street photographer and have your photo for £5, because his work is good, and then go to a man in the East End of London for attending to the technical side of it, because the technical side is not quite good in Bond street, you want to be paid because you have got the reputation of being a good photographer?

A. No, I do not want that. We, the few of us that are now in this country, are practically on the same plane. We understand what is a good point. I do not want to be paid more because I am Samuels. I want to be paid a reasonable price that would leave a margin of profit. That is all that I want.

Q. That again is done by tendering for the contract?

A. If the tender is made open to the public, then the best of us cannot do it. I will give you my reasons. The Burman calculates 3 as a foot for negative.

Q. It does not include overhead charges?

A. It does not include that. Otherwise how are we who have a large establishment, to turn out pictures at that rate?

Q. You say the 'Thief of Baghdad' was quite a success in Burma?

A. Yes.

Q. Given the oriental setting, what is the other factor in the 'Thief of Baghdad' that makes it popular in America, Burma and India?

A. It is the thief.

Q. Douglas Fairbanks?

A. Yes.

Q. Have you tried to find out a Douglas Fairbanks in Burma? Have you ever thought of putting such a man as The Great Po Sein on the screen?

A. I would not like to make any remarks here on this.

Q. I only wanted to know because he is a popular actor?

A. He is a popular man, but he has not the face necessary for film acting.

Q. You want more action?

A. He wanted to come on the cinema many a time, but his excuse was this that if you see him on the cinema, you will not care to see him on the stage. He would have proved a perfect failure in film life.

Chairman: I do not think we need bother ourselves about persons. We can get on.

Col. Crawford: It is the action in the 'Thief of Baghdad' that is the primary factor, I suppose?

A. It is the man.

Q. And if you would try an entirely new method of producing your film for the Burman after the nature of the 'Thief of Baghdad', you might capture him?

A. You are quite right there. If we can train the boys in a studio with a view to their becoming film actors, there would certainly be a 'Thief of Baghdad'. The ordinary Burman is quite intelligent, although the majority of the people are not educated.

Q. Has anybody tried Burmese comic films?

A. Yes, the company of my friend here The Burmese Favourite Co. has tried one.

Q. Has it been a success?

A. I think so.

Q. In the old days the film included many things which we would call vulgar. Have you got those characteristics in your films?

A. No. The picture produced by the Burmese Favourite Co. was quite on a different line. It was appreciated by the Burman people. But we have not gone into that line very much.

Q. You spoke of another thing, the possibility of producing a film for the international market which has to be a different type of film, a film to meet the taste of many people. Is there any reason why you should not produce any such film in Burma?

A. None, except finance.

Q. You will have to come into touch with western theatres?

A. Yes, we will have to see the other side as well as we see ourselves.

Q. Supposing you make one international film and you fill up your spare time with turning out the short films for the limited Burman market, do you think it would be a paying proposition?

A. It would be, I think.

Q. Will not a big company really, say out in America, produce ten or fifteen of the cheaper films for the Burman market and big films for the whole market? Is that not a possibility?

A. That is a possibility. In fact I have thought over it myself, and as I said just now, it is only finance that is preventing me from carrying out my idea. We may perhaps be able to succeed up to a certain limit in Burma, but no further unless we tap outside market.

Q. That is what I am coming to. To put the industry on a firm footing, the Burman market is not sufficient, in your opinion?

A. Not sufficient.

Oral Evidence of MA LAY KIN, Mistress, Pegu Karen School, Rangoon, on Thursday, the 19th January 1928.

Chairman: You are a Mistress in a Girls' school?

A. A mixed school, The Pegu Karen High School, Ahlone.

Q. Are you the head mistress?

A. I am one of the mistresses in the High School department. But I come here more as one of the cinema sub-committee of the Women's National Council, and not as a representative of the school.

Q. You represent more the Women's National Council of Burma?

A. Yes.

Q. Can you tell us who formed the sub-committee which went into this question and made the report?

A. It was started at the request of the Vigilance Society, and the Women's National Council thereupon formed a sub-committee for the purpose and I am one on it.

Q. Who else was on the sub-committee?

A. Mrs. Bulkeley, Mrs. Fraser, Dr. Mrs. Sastri, Mrs. Tyabji, and others.

Q. What is it that you are all afraid about from the cinema, what is your fear?

A. It is not exactly that we are afraid of anything or that we trace anything bad to the cinema, but we have a feeling that in proper and immoral scenes on screens are one of the sources of the low morals of to-day as soon as we noticed that there was much crime and that morality has been at a low ebb, the Vigilance Society of Rangoon took up the question and requested us to see if any means could be found to check the evil and see if we could trace anything to the cinema.

Q. Are you really apprehensive about the cinema?

A. Not exactly; but to a certain extent. Some things are shown in the cinema which would not do any harm to the people, i.e., adults or educated people, but which may be bad so far as adolescents and school boys or girls are concerned. Of course as a school teacher I do not want my school boys or girls to copy some of the things shown on the screen. For instance, sometimes we are not seeing things quite decent. I do not mean to say that all

the cinemas are bad or trashy, but there are some which are too passionate.

Q. Do you go to the cinema much?

A. When I was a student I used to go often, but I don't go unless I know that there is something coming which I would like to see.

Q. How long is it since you took to that habit?

A. From the time I took to teaching. That is, four or five years ago.

Q. So that you don't go to the cinema unless you wish to see something which you have heard about?

A. Yes, which I think will be good, and are from mostly classical and historical books which I have read.

Q. And you always thought that such a reputation was well-deserved, whenever you went?

A. Sometimes I was also disappointed.

Q. Even about films which had been reported to be good?

A. Not reported exactly; sometimes the advertisements would attract me, sometimes the actors or actresses.

Q. During the last five years how often have you found anything objectionable?

A. I could not say how often, but in some of the pictures women almost naked were shown, or there were close-up kisses, crime and all that which I do not think should be shown to young children. Another thing I object to is the serials, which make the children get into the habit of going to see them regularly.

Q. Because they create a taste for lively thrills?

A. Yes, besides they make the young people wish to go every time and they would like to keep in touch with the story. Later on, going will become a regular habit.

Q. You don't want the cinema-going habit to be created?

A. No, I should say that I don't wish my boys and girls get into that habit. We do not want them to be completely puritanical; once in a way they might go and enjoy themselves, but to get into the habit and be a slave to that habit is really bad.

Q. Are there many people like that or only a few who have got into that habit?

A. I believe in Burma the habit is getting very strong. Nowadays every house is fully packed.

Q. All Burmese people?

A. Not all Burmese people.

Q. But Burmese are generally attracted only by Burman films?

A. I think so, and the reason why they are is that they understand them much better than that of the English films.

Q. But very few Burmans go to the western films. Have you seen many when you went?

A. Yes. At least one-third of the audience are Burmans. Those who can read English and who are attracted by English ways go there.

Q. You are afraid that the adolescents would be affected by the cinema?

A. That is what we are trying to find out, if we can. If it is a man or a woman, if he or she attends the cinema and is tired of it, he or she can stop; but the young people may not know when to stop once they take to the habit, especially those between 15 and 20 years of age.

Q. I suppose you do not like your young men or young women to go to western theatres, for instance, the Black Bottom revue?

A. If it is properly censored it does not do any harm.

Q. Have you yourself seen a western dance? Do you think your young men and women or boys and girls should see that?

A. I have seen a few. Most of our boys and girls do not go to that. I do not mind if they see it once in a way.

Q. So also you don't mind their seeing such things once in a way on the screen?

A. No, if they are just common waltzing or folk dances.

Q. But what you object to is their getting into that habit?

A. Yes.

Q. Your point of view is that they should not see too many scenes like that?

A. Yes, and there are many suggestive films shown which our boys and girls may or may not take the suggestions for the first few times but all the same I don't want that such things should be seen.

Q. How often during the last five years have you seen films to which you would take objection?

A. Perhaps on an average of once a month, not regularly. One very recently in "Ben-Hur" when Messala greeted Iras, the Egyptian on a couch, she in her very scanty Egyptian dress. Then in "The Merry Widow" the changing dress scene after the spilling of soup.

Q. You don't attend the serials?

A. I do not go to the serials at all.

Q. It is only the social dramas that are generally crowded?

A. They do not attract uneducated audience; only educated men go there, but the serials are quite crowded.

Q. In the report which you have made, you say: "Owing to the different standards of behaviour many films which would be harmless in the West are definitely pernicious here"?

A. Perhaps not quite pernicious, but sometimes immoral and suggestive; pernicious seems too strong a term.

Q. You say you have not seen anything immoral?

A. Sometimes I have.

Q. You are thinking of these close-up embraces and scenes?

A. Yes, suggestive scenes; sometimes there are people at the back shouting and calling out at those scenes and that shows they are affected by those scenes.

Q. You again say in your report: "Kissing in the view of the public is a western custom, but is regarded by Orientals as either indecent or immodest". Supposing in the railway station people take leave and they kiss each other, are you to stop it?

A. Not that I mean to stop that, but a display of passions on screens. I am not prepared to stop kissing where it is a matter of habit or custom.

Q. Your report says: "The Los Angeles films with their flaunting of extravagance, their frivolity and false morality, objectionable enough in England where the audience knows them to be exaggerated, are often here regarded as representations of normal life in Europe or America." Do you think people here imagine that what they see on the screen represents the normal life of the people in the west?

A. That is the belief sometimes. People believe that in England and America most of the women are living almost naked and have loose ways.

Q. But those who attend the Burmese films, see all sorts of super-natural things?

A. Yes; they do.

Q. Then do the people who attend such films believe in the normal life of the Burman as they see it on the screen?

A. No; they know of course that the thing does not really happen.

Q. Do you think then that they believe in what the western films show as the normal life of the people in the west?

A. Yes; because they know that scenes shown in the Western films are natural and can happen and are not super-natural.

Q. What is your basis for thinking it is possible. Is it a mere surmise, or is it from conversations with people of your standing?

A. Not that I have had any serious conversations with people of my standing, but only as a result of my contact with boys and girls. I feel that they have an idea that such a sort of life is going on there. I do not say that by itself it is bad, but they do not get the normal type of living there.

Q. I suppose they form opinions of the people from what they see in actual life?

A. They see very little of actual life in the films and they are too young to weigh the facts.

Q. In that case, why do you think that they are likely to think of all this?

A. In social history lessons I have found that their ideas are fixed more by the cinema rather than by the statements of the books.

Q. Why are you so hard only on the Los Angeles type? Are not the same objections applicable to the English films? Is not kissing shown there?

A. In the Los Angeles, the actors and actresses emphasise loose life.

Q. I can understand people having an interest in the trade making such statements; but why do you refer to that in particular? Have you seen "The Rat,"

A. No.

Q. What films have you seen?

A. I am not able to name them, not exactly.

Q. And yet you make a statement regarding the particular type of films.

A. The reason, why I suggested it, is because of the dress which is scarcely happy.

Q. That does not appear to be the case on the English films.

A. No; not usually.

Q. Who were the members referred to in this report.

A. I think they are Miss Mack, Mrs. Fraser, Mrs. Bulkley and Mrs. Ba Yoke.

Q. Do you say in the local cinema industry they are imitating the West.

A. They are adapting. They are imitating in acting the English films.

Q. Then you would like to stop western films from coming here?

A. The Censor will pass everything that is entertaining.

Q. Do you know the Commissioner of Police has told us definitely and many police officers also have stated definitely that the cinema had no influence on crime. Do you know it and do you share the apprehensions which you have expressed in your report.

A. I have not made a study of crime. I have no better evidence.

Q. So you advise us to trust ourselves to their judgment.

A. I think not entirely.

Q. Do you believe in excluding children altogether from going to the cinema.

A. Children under 10 or 12 years should not be allowed to see unsuitable films.

Q. Do you really think that it should be done?

A. I do not really want them to see all that is bad. The whole thing, I should think, must be left to the censor.

Q. Are you satisfied with the work of the Burma Board of Censors.

A. Not quite; there are now about 8 only but if we have more people to represent the various branches, education, etc., it would be better. At present the training of children is left in the hands of the teachers, and more Educationalist should be on it.

Q. Have you any evidence of the system of advance 'block' and 'blind' booking.

A. No, not personally.

Q. You think that stricter censorship is needed.

A. Yes. I have talked about it with some people and they are also of the opinion that careful censorship would put things right.

Mr. Green: I take it that you are chiefly concerned with the effect of the cinema on the children and adolescents?

A. Yes.

Q. You told the Chairman that you yourself, as a student, went frequently to the cinema.

A. Yes, when a college student. I had more time to spare and less responsibility then, and was careful in the choice of films. Besides I was no longer a child.

Q. In view of the responsible position that you now hold in the scholastic world, I think we may be satisfied that the cinema had no bad effect?

A. On the other hand I should say it was educative and had a broadening effect; for example, I have been to see a film "Hookworm" and I took the children down to see it. Some of the pictures, 'Everest expedition', 'Mons', are really good ones. But I would point out that some of our boys when we would have expected them to be in their beds at night, 9-30, had actually left the house to go to the cinema. This is not good at all.

Q. The attraction seems to be great?

A. Yes.

Q. Your Council have suggested the issue of A and C certificates—A for universal exhibition, C only for children under 13.

A. Yes.

Q. We had a large amount of evidence to show that any attempt to restrict films in this way will lead to the very thing which we want to avoid, namely, that less desirable films will receive undue advertisement. Is there any risk there?

A. There may be the risk but if we have definite sets of films like that we can also have a law to bar the children below 12 years from going to them.

Q. You have already stated that there should be special performances for children. Our evidence tends to show that the owners of cinema houses generally think that it would not pay them. Do you think that your school, for example, would be prepared to guarantee that a certain number of tickets would be taken if a certain cinema gave a children's performance?

A. In our school we allow the children to go freely when educative films are shown but as far as the guarantee is concerned it is a matter for the Principal and not for me.

Q. You went to see mainly the films from the west?

A. Yes; Burman films have become popular only recently. Generally they are very crowded and both men and women are incessant smokers, and the acting was not very good. That is the reason why the Burmese cinema houses do not appeal to me.

Q. So far as the actual film part of it is concerned, do you find the Burman film attractive or do you still go to the Western films.

A. If I were to choose now I would go to the western film, but if acting, filming and story were good I would go to the other films also.

Q. You like the stories of the western films?

A. Yes, if they are good. If the Burmese films depicted Burmese life I would go to them. There is a rumour that a film called the 'Vidhura' was being made. If it is exhibited I would like to go. I do not object to the Burman or English film if it is good.

Q. I am trying to suggest to you that the Burman loves to see the western film because there is something wrong in the Burman film, e.g., absence of

continuity, (2) photography is not good, (3) the story is not good. That is why he prefers to go to the western film?

A. I think so.

Q. Now as a Burmese lady belonging to the National Council of Women, would you tell me what is the real objection to the western film?

A. I think passion is there over-done. It is the close-up kissing and exaggerated passion on the screen that I object to.

Q. So you would like stricter censorship of this aspect?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you think Burmans would go and see western films if the titles were in Burman? Would they be attractive to them?

A. Generally they do not understand western pictures. Possibly the titles in Burmese would attract them.

Q. Has Madans ever tried to show western films with Burman titles?

A. I do not think so, because I have never seen it myself.

Chairman: Thank you very much.

Written Statement of Mr. D. A. NARIMAN, Manager, Madan Theatres, Ltd., Rangoon Circuit, dated the 5th January 1928.

1. The concern now known as The Madan Theatres, Ltd., were the pioneers of the Cinematograph Industry in British India and I have been for last 14 years the manager of its business in Burma. From my personal experience and knowledge I am of the following opinion.

2. (a) Our cinemas and theatres at Rangoon cater separately for different classes of audience. The cinemas showing up-to-date Western pictures are frequented largely by the educated classes of Indians and Burmans. Majority of the illiterate classes of Indians and Burmans and Chinese prefer the familiar atmosphere and ideals depicted in films of their own production. For this reason we have in Rangoon, two of our cinemas regularly showing nothing but Burmese films, and one Indian films, and occasionally we display Chinese films too. For the educated classes we have three cinemas in Rangoon showing British and American productions.

(b) Almost the whole of the audience at houses showing Indian, Burmese and Chinese films is respectively composed of Indians, Burmans and Chinese while Europeans and Indians and Burmans of the educated classes flock to see Western productions.

(c) At the matinee performances children (mostly with their parents) comprise about 6 to 8 per cent. of the audience. Parents sure prefer to make them devote their leisure hours in the evenings to recreation and sport. In the case of adolescents of impressionable age the attention which their extra studies entail limits considerably their visits to cinemas.

3. Indian audiences for this subject must mean in Rangoon and Burma audiences of all classes and communities other than Europeans. Indians and Burmese of literate classes find their popular entertainments in high class Western films depicting dramatic and thrilling subjects as well as in their national clever productions, while illiterate classes prefer their typical national productions to Western films, which (later) mostly they fail to follow.

4. Exhibitors are catering adequately for all classes of audiences as they have made a study of the requirements and demands of the public. However, the number of films locally produced are of very limited quantity.

5. Films produced in India and Burma are not readily available. The industry is in its infancy and the number of productions is limited.

(a) They are on the whole of very poor quality in comparison with the far advanced productions of the West.

(b) They are popular, amongst those who seek such entertainments, for reasons mentioned hereinbefore.

(c) In Burma, Burmese producers, who undertake work in a business-like manner, find that their pictures pay them satisfactorily. Films produced in India are presented in Burma, generally only in Rangoon, and exhibitors do fair business with them.

There are many "successful Burmese Films" particularly of the British-Burma Film Co., London Art Film Co., and Burmese Favourite Co. "Successful Indian Films" Pati Bhakti, Gul Bakavali, Dhruv Charitra, Kalanag, Treasures of Kalyan, Nurjehan, etc.

6. (a) Mainly to the illiterate classes of the cinema going public films relating to their own race, and past and present circumstances and conditions of life would be more popular than the prevalent Western films which they fail to appreciate or understand.

(b) Films of historical and mythological subjects appeal most strongly to both Indian and Burmese audiences.

(1) Educated classes of both races prefer pictures that are true to life.

(2) While the illiterate have a decided liking for religious and mythological subjects which stir their imagination.

7. No difficulty is experienced in obtaining suitable films for British troops for they enjoy the latest Western films. The case is different with Indian troops. Extremely few of the Indian troops attend cinema performances and only locally produced pictures of their own race appeal to them.

Films like Zeebrugge, Somme, Ypres, Mons, etc., appeal to British troops.

8. Conditions of the industry in this country for the distribution and exhibition of first class films are favourable.

(b) As for productions the main difficulties besetting the industry are the lack of proper studios, technical advisers, and big capital. The co-operation of the Government and Municipal Corporations is sadly lacking.

9. Good films are available at suitable prices. There is absolutely no monopoly or tendency to monopolise the supply or exhibition of films.

10. In the case of suitable pictures it is necessary to buy a certain number of good films in order to keep going the many cinema houses that may be situated in the same locality. Key theatres exist in India. The best returns are obtained from these houses and in return the public enjoys better productions.

11. Yes.

12. It is a great handicap to the Exhibitor. It greatly reduces his returns. Families take into consideration the extra involved in view of the Amusements tax and consequently both limit their visits and content themselves with seats of the cheaper class. Thus the Exhibitor loses about 50 per cent. of his revenue and the progress of the industry by way of improvement in the quality of the pictures is greatly handicapped.

13. There is a definite demand for Western films by the educated classes which can never be replaced by films locally produced and the heavy Customs Tariff on imported films merely tends to increase costs and to deprive the public of the best. It does not in any way help the indigenous production. To help the public to obtain the best the Customs Duty on all foreign films should be reduced and that on publicity materials, like photo, posters, etc., should be entirely removed.

The local industry could be encouraged by entirely removing the Customs Duty on negative films cameras and all accessories required for the production of pictures.

14. Increased use of the cinemas for education and propaganda would be welcome if suitably undertaken. It should be remembered that the public goes to theatres to be entertained and not to be taught. The demand for this class of films should be created by Government and other Agencies by carrying out propaganda necessary in this behalf.

15. Conditions in this country are not so favourable as they should be for the development of Indian films producing industry on a large scale, firstly, because the enormous capital required for the purpose is not forthcoming, and secondly, because films produced in India, however good they may be, have very little chance of competing in foreign countries. However, the country should have its own industry and the co-operation of the Government and the public departments which is essential to help the producer with facilities for staging their pictures must be granted.

16. We lack Indian producers, directors, actors, actresses, and scenario-writers of sufficient technical knowledge, etc., in this country on whom the country can depend for a substantial output of films. The Government should encourage the art by giving scholarships and should send Indians abroad and give them every other facility to learn and work the business.

17. Capital required on a large scale for film production will not be easily forthcoming in this country.

18. The present undertakings in film production are undertaken by men with very little experience of the industry whose efforts are often doomed to failure from the outset. Government should encourage by scholarships, the training of students in this art to form the nucleus for the guidance and instruction of enthusiastic producers. Government could greatly encourage the industry by setting up an up-to-date studio of its own and letting it out on hire to different producing companies who can ill afford to work one. It would help the producers to produce better pictures and to take a more substantial interest in the art than they can do at present.

19. The cost of film production in this country is far less than that of any other country. But at the same time the quality of the film is comparatively poor and its chances of making a way into foreign countries is practically nil.

20. Yes. My proposal involves expenditure from Government Funds. I consider this expenditure as justifiable as it could create employment for many and give a great impetus to the cinema industry in general. The Government is realising substantial amount from Customs duty on films, machineries, advertisement matters, etc., of cinematograph concerns, imported from foreign countries and they could well utilise the revenue derived from such sources.

21. The safeguards at present existing are sufficient to maintain a proper standard for the films exhibited. In this connection Government should interest itself merely in providing educational and other films of an instructive nature for the enlightenment of the public. Like all other trades the cinema industry has sufficient competition which in itself is inducement to furnish the best types of films.

The proposal that a State agency should be created to undertake the recreations of the public at large is a most absurd one.

22. Provided the Empire films are suitable both as regards the price and quality there is no reason why we should not participate in the resolution of the Imperial conference.

(a) Participation would not at all help our industry as our films are of very poor quality and will not be attractive to other countries.

(b) Obviously no, as Indian films would not make headway out of India.

(c) No.

23. Films depicting conditions, resources and habits of the people and the activities of the various Governments of the British Commonwealth of Nations would be of an advantage provided they are presented in their proper perspective and not got up to boost up one people to the detriment of the other.

24. (a) No.

(b) No.

(c) Films of very low moral tone are hardly allowed to be exhibited.

(d) Censorship is adequate in the case of sex films and crime films. Two of the three presidents of the board of censors, viz., Bombay and Calcutta,

have already stated in evidence that crime is no way increased owing to the films and the third the local president has expressed a similar opinion in the press. These three being also Commissioners of Police their opinion is the best possible refutation of the ill informed and often preconceived notions of the layman to the contrary.

(e) This question does not rise at all.

25. We have already a local board of censors for British India, for the purpose mentioned, although all pictures imported in India are passed by the censors in America, or Great Britain, or often there are certificates attached with the films of both the countries. What is good for Bombay or Calcutta, must be good for Rangoon. If there are people in this country so narrow-minded as to ask for a special board of censors for every town or village, they subject themselves to open ridicule.

26. Care should be taken and enough care is taken not to offend religious susceptibilities and except for one film the Life of Buddah, there has not been a single instance in Burma where a film was known to offend religious susceptibilities and even in that instance opinion was greatly divided and the film was on our hearing of the objections, willingly withdrawn by us to prevent further discussion.

27. The uneducated masses prefer their Swadeshi films. It is mostly the educated or those who can follow that throng to see the exhibition of western films, and they understand too well to misconceive ideas.

(b) No film of any importance produced in India has found its way abroad. I do not know of any film exhibited abroad that has had a tendency to misrepresent Indian civilisation.

28. No films having a bad effect on children and adolescents are allowed to be shown.

29. No. Such certification is a glaring temptation to other than adults, who would go specially to see such films.

30. There is always a moral lesson to be learned from most of the films. Impressions of the pitfalls in life acquired at a young age would influence greatly the formation of character, especially when they are obtained under judicious parental guidance as they would be at the cinemas.

31. It is.

32. Censorship in this province is quite satisfactory. The only improvement that we may suggest is to have an appeal board either in Burma or in any part of India to which we could refer our grievances, whenever they should arise.

33. It will interfere unreasonably with the recreations of the people.

(b) It will involve a falling off in the attendance at cinemas.

(c) It will undoubtedly interfere with the freedom required for artistic and inspirational development.

34. We do not recommend replacing the present provincial board of censors by a single central board, as it will be very expensive to the exhibitors to send their films to them from all parts of India and Burma, and besides such Central Board will hardly have the facilities to know and study the local conditions that local boards have. The only improvement we may suggest is to have an appeal board in addition to the provincial boards, so that no arbitrary judgment by any provincial board could penalise the struggling exhibitor.

35. It is satisfactory. Still there is room for one press representative and one representative of the cinemas to be included on the board.

(b) No single officer appointed as a censor, however clever he may be, can possibly be a right judge of every film that confronts him for decision.

36. Bombay and Calcutta Cinema Associations and the trade representatives must have answered this point. My reply is given in No. 35.

37. Films exhibited in India are sometimes banned in Burma which indicates that the local Board of Censors is stricter in its examination than the two main boards of India, Bombay and Bengal.

38. I know of about a dozen of films which have been allowed in India and found objectionable and banned in this province by the Local Board.

39. I have not come across nor have I heard of any one coming across a picture disapproved of in the country of origin and in Great Britain, being allowed to be exhibited in British India. There is no chance of such a picture being imported by any one.

40. Censorship of posters, handbills and advertisements is unnecessary and unadvisable. It's most objectionable to unduly restrict the freedom of the trade to such an extent. The posters and photos are exact duplications of the scenes on the films, and when the films are passed for exhibition, what need could there be for censorship of posters as well. The posters and advertisements are mostly same as displayed throughout the world. A few months ago, the Local Commissioner of Police was unable to point out (in the presence of editors of the two leading newspapers) a single advertisement or poster which he had seen in Rangoon and which he could class as objectionable.

41. There has been immense improvement already in the standard of the films being produced and exhibited in this country in recent years and undoubtedly this improvement will go on increasing in time to come.

42. The co-operation of the trade in the matter of censoring is absolutely necessary. A member of the trade should be on the board to point out the difficulties that confront exhibitors. Sense and feeling of mutual respect and understanding is absolutely essential.

43. Exhibitors often pay enormous sums to secure exclusive rights of exhibition of some of the most valuable productions. Their exclusive rights are often infringed upon by the importation of pirated copies of these films by smaller cinema concerns who obtain such copies at 1/20th of its price. These unfair importations subject the owners of exclusive rights to great financial loss and is inequitable. Censorship certificates must be withheld or withdrawn from pirated copies.

44. Public bodies and the trades should assist in maintaining a good standard of films by helping the producers in every possible way they can and by giving honest and impartial views of the film productions.

45. Government control over the film production is not at all necessary. The censorship is enough for all requirements. A producing company regards the subject-matter of its production with great privacy and any interference by other than the producers staff will work against the producer's interest. The films producing agency may be registered and licensed but the periodical inspection of studios would be an unnecessary interference.

Oral Evidence of Mr. D. A. NARIMAN, Manager, Madan Theatres, Ltd., Burma Circuit, on Friday, the 20th January 1928.

Chairman: You have sent us a statement, Mr. Nariman?

A. I have already given one statement. I sent it to Madras.

Q. How many theatres are there under your control in Rangoon?

A. Six cinemas directly under my control.

Q. Are there any (besides the six which are under your direct control) in what is known as association with you?

A. No.

Q. All of them are owned and run by you.

A. Owned by Madan Theatres, Ltd., and under my management.

Q. Of these, you exclusively run two for Burmese pictures?

A. Yes, Sir.

Q. Now and then you add Chinese pictures?

A. Very seldom. Just for example, next week there is the Chinese New Year and I am issuing a Chinese picture for exhibition that day.

Q. The "Dagon" and the "Star." These are the two theatres in which the Burmese pictures are shown?

A. Yes.

Q. How many pictures do you show in a year? Do you show different pictures? Supposing you show a picture at the Dagon, will it pay you to show it in Star the same month.

A. Not necessarily at the same time unless the film owners insist on the same.

Q. Both attract only Burmese audiences? Suppose in the month of January you show a picture in the Dagon will you show it in the same month at the Star? They are so close to each other.

A. I don't think so unless there are special circumstances that compel us to do so. Say, for example, the exhibitor wants to show his pictures for two weeks in the Dagon and the Dagon is available for only one week, we can exhibit it in the Star for the second week. Except on such occasions we exhibit the same picture at the same place as far as possible.

Q. Do you send the film out to the mufassal?

A. The Burman pictures are mostly owned by the Burman producers. They prefer to run it first in Rangoon. As soon as they have seen the results of it in Rangoon they know the market value of their product. Then only will they send it out.

Q. Do they take up the distribution themselves or do you undertake it?

A. They do it.

Q. Have you any theatres up-country?

A. We have one at Mandalay, one at Maymyo, we are hiring out our films at Moulmein and we have just opened one this month at Bassein.

Q. Where you show all sorts of pictures?

A. There being only one theatre in many of these places we show mostly western films. But still we do show there occasionally some good Indian pictures as well as Burmese pictures.

Q. Of the six theatres, two are devoted to Burmese films, and how many to Indian?

A. One of ours and there is also the Cinema de Paris.

Q. So there is room for increasing the halls for Indian pictures?

A. I do not think so.

Q. Is there room for increasing the halls for Burmese pictures?

A. I doubt that too very much because just a month ago the Olympia was showing Burmese pictures. But now they are showing only Universal pictures. One of the three halls found it difficult to get the pictures. From the evidence also yesterday I saw that the Burmese productions are very limited and it would not pay either party, the supplier as well as the exhibitor, to go on showing the same film over and over again.

Q. Now people want variety and new things?

A. Yes.

Q. How many Burmese pictures will you be able to show in the two theatres put together in the year?

A. That is a little difficult point to answer. We give them the theatre and we get a percentage. Our percentage is 30. It may be sometimes 25. But when it is the 4th or 5th turn, it may be more.

Q. What I want to know is how many pictures can be shown every year in your two theatres where you show Burmese pictures?

A. If we show each picture for two weeks then there would be 26 pictures in each of the theatres, but generally they are not satisfied with running the pictures for two weeks and so they insist upon running the pictures for another week which entails much loss for us. From a business point of view if the Burmese pictures were run for the third week on the percentage basis, that would be a miserable loss for us.

Q. I suppose ordinarily 2 weeks is about the average that you can show any one picture in Rangoon unless it be an extremely good one?

A. No, last year, in about 90 per cent. of the pictures shown they were extended to three weeks. Even though my proposal was to run these pictures for 2 weeks, they would not be satisfied.

Q. How many producers, out of the 20 and odd that are said to be here, come to you generally for exhibiting their pictures?

A. There are 23 producers but from the files of the Commissioner of Police you will find that they are hardly producing one picture every year; except some of the producers who gave evidence here yesterday, the others are all failures generally.

Q. What I want to know is, do they come to you for exhibiting their films?

A. Yes, they do. There is another hall, the Olympia, but now they are not showing these Burmese pictures there. The Olympia theatre authorities have now arranged with the Universal Company of Bombay and they are showing Universal pictures.

Q. How many theatres are there in Rangoon which are independent of Madans?

A. As cinemas there are ten besides our four: The Globe Cinema, Cinema de Paris, Raphael Picture Palace and the Olympia Cinema, and there are other theatrical halls too, such as the Jubilee hall which is controlled by the Rangoon Corporation and hired out very frequently to theatrical parties. Of course there are concerts and dances also going on there. There are also some other halls in the city besides these.

Q. Have they ever shown cinema pictures in those other halls at all?

A. They can be easily fitted up for cinema shows with a little expenditure.

Q. Are they hired by the day or the month?

A. Mostly they run them as theatrical halls and they also hire them out on daily rentals.

Q. Which is the house that shows Chinese pictures only? I believe the Raphael Picture house?

A. But not always. My information is that they are showing Burmese and Chinese pictures, Burmese dances, etc. They have ceased to show Burmese pictures now.

Q. Why is it so? Is it not situated in the Burmese quarters?

A. Yes, it is in the Burmese quarter alright, but that house is not quite popular with the public.

Q. Have you ever had occasion to refuse to show Burmese pictures at all to any of the producers in any of your two houses?

A. No, unless they have been previously engaged. But whenever there are festival occasions, sometimes more than one producer demands the same theatre. Except for this there has been no occasion when they were refused.

Q. In these theatres, where you show Burmese pictures only, is it a paying proposition?

A. We get very little. We have specially kept these halls for the Burmese to encourage their film industry, though we are getting very little in return.

Q. How long have you been running these two halls for the Burmese pictures?

A. Ever since we acquired them.

Q. And before that?

A. They were showing Burmese films. The most popular Burmese picture house to-day, the Dagon, was hardly a quarter as popular as it is now.

Q. Now, with regard to the Indian pictures, are they all Madans productions that are shown?

A. No, not necessarily. We are showing pictures produced by at least 5 different producers in India.

Q. What do you give them?

A. Sometimes 35 to 40 per cent. of the income according to the quality of the production.

Q. But you give 70 per cent. of the proceeds in the case of Burmese films? Why is the difference?

A. To encourage Burmese producers we give them a special concession. It is also a fact that in the case of Burmese pictures the producers themselves provide the music and also advertise themselves. But in the case of Indian productions we do the advertising, provide music, etc.

Q. But surely the difference is very large?

A. Yes, there is a marked difference but we have been doing that to encourage Burmese industry. Moreover, the audience in the Burmese houses will be much larger sometimes and therefore our income will be proportionately larger in the Burmese houses than in the Indian houses.

Q. Do you ever show Japanese or Chinese films?

A. I have shown the Japanese Earthquake film which was taken the following day after the actual earthquake took place there and that was an interesting film. It was a very good topical picture. We also show Chinese films occasionally, probably once in a year.

Q. How do they appeal to the Burman audience?

A. They don't appeal to them at all.

Q. And how do the Indian pictures appeal to the Burman audience?

A. Not even 1 per cent. of the audience is Burman.

Q. So mostly Burmans go to the Burman pictures, you say?

A. Yes.

Q. What is your experience of matinee performances for children? Do you now and then organise matinee performances for children?

A. We have the 3-30 p.m. shows on Saturdays and Sundays in the most popular theatres and two shows in all other theatres.

Q. Are those specially run for children?

A. No, the same programme is being shown generally, but sometimes we show a full comic programme when children attend in more numbers than usual.

Q. When you show such things, is the attendance enough to pay you, or have you to run it at a loss, these matinees, I mean?

A. These special shows are generally working at a loss.

Q. Can you give us the average takings of all the theatres in Rangoon under Madans management, say, during the month of December?

A. Yes, I can furnish details. Do you want only the Cinema income or other theatrical incomes also, e.g., in theatres like the Excelsior, we show sometimes theatrical shows also?

Q. You may give us a list showing the box office collections for cinema shows during the last month, you may show collections for cinema shows and theatrical shows for so many days in the month, like that?

A. Yes, I will furnish details as required.

Q. Do you advise the Burmese producers as to what improvements they could effect in their films or do they consult you at all?

A. Oh, no, they are very slow to take advice. For example, they show pictures at one show, productions ranging between 14 thousand and 16

thousand feet. Such productions could be easily cut down to 10,000 feet. It would be to their advantage if they shortened the length. Sometimes people wait for more than $\frac{1}{2}$ of an hour to get admission, in the rains even, and generally the second shows begin more than an hour later than the advertised time!

Q. Do the Indian producers consult you as to the taste of the Burman audience?

A. No, we make the selection of films and order them from India, through our head office.

Q. In answer to question 8 (b) you have said that lack of proper studios, lack of advisers and lack of capital are a hindrance to the trade. Do you think the establishment of a Government studio with qualified experts will be an advantage to the industry?

A. Since writing out my answers I have had a different idea. I am not differing from my original statement, of course. I would suggest that the subject of the cinema industry be made an optional subject in the College Classes and the students be made to pay some special fees for the study of the same, because, you know a beginner will have to waste a good deal of material before he could study the technique.

Q. Supposing the Government have to produce public utility films such as education, industry, public health and other subjects, do you think Government should do it themselves in their own studios or leave it to private agency?

A. If Government were to produce public instructional films I am afraid they will not be tolerated in public cinema houses which are only meant for entertainment. If it is for propaganda they will have to exhibit them in public museums or public halls.

Q. Apart from that difficulty do you think private agencies should be employed or Government should have their own studios for the purpose?

A. I should think private agencies should be encouraged and if the work was not done satisfactorily then the Government may take it up themselves. Otherwise, I should think it will be competing unnecessarily with private enterprise.

Q. But at present the Indian or Burman producers are not producing such instructional films?

A. Because there is no demand at present.

Q. But then if Government make it compulsory on the cinemas to show a few feet of these instructional films along with their usual shows?

A. I don't think it would be popular if you make it compulsory, e.g., a film on say, Plague, though it is interesting and instructive no doubt in itself, would not be appreciated by the audience and they would feel it disgusting.

Q. Are Madans attempting to produce any films in Rangoon?

A. Not at present.

Q. Now you have got already 6 cinema houses in your charge. What is it that induced you to go in for the cinema opposite to you?

A. It was publicly advertised. We are not only exhibitors, we are importers and we are also producers. We cater for every kind of entertainment, Indian, Burman, Chinese, theatricals, etc. Whenever we feel the necessity of increasing our business, as anybody else, why should not we do it?

Q. You have offered nearly four times more than the present rental?

A. That was because of keen competition. The matter was advertised in the local papers for some time and we naturally give the highest offer. Even yesterday one gentleman representing the Burma Film Producers' Association confessed that his offer was next to ours.

Q. You have got enough houses to show your pictures in Rangoon and yet you are going in for a 7th, which is probably the only rival to you of any competence in Rangoon?

A. That competition does not stand in our way.

Q. If you go and offer four times the present rent then it means unfair competition?

A. We have taken that hall with a different motive. It is not our intention to open a cinema there. We want to extend our business in another direction. For the last 15 years or so there has been a population of over one lakh of Indians in Rangoon and there is not a single good theatrical company which has come to Rangoon. They have no hall available for them with a stage. The Globe Theatre has a stage and it is our intention to start an Indian theatrical company there.

Q. You say there was fair competition. What was the next lowest tender for it?

A. That was Rs. 3,500 by the Director of the Burmese Favourite Company. He mentioned it yesterday.

Q. You say here definitely in your statement under No. 18 that the Government would greatly encourage the industry by setting up an up-to-date studio of its own and letting it out on hire to different producing companies who cannot themselves afford to work one. Is that your idea?

A. Yes.

Q. You approve of it?

A. Yes, especially in Burma where as you have seen these 3 or 4 important producing concerns go on speculating.

Q. How many theatres are there which show Burman films with advantage?

A. Where?

Q. In Burma.

A. There are 65 cinemas in Burma and you can show Burman pictures anywhere.

Q. I mean with profit?

A. You cannot show Burmese pictures everywhere with advantage, at least as far as Rangoon is concerned but in the interior you can.

Q. Would the exhibitor show it? Supposing I have got a film to exhibit. Will the exhibitor take it?

A. He would more willingly take it than any Western film. Because in villages and in small towns education is very much behind and they would more easily follow a Burman picture than a western picture.

Q. I am putting you this question in order to know how you approve of the idea that every theatre should be compelled to show a certain amount of Burmese films in order to encourage the industry. You don't think it would be a hardship to the exhibitor?

A. Where there is the right kind of audience he would not find it hard. But in other places it will be a hardship. Even in the interior, say, in Mandalay, we will have one European house. The Europeans naturally would not stand the Burmese pictures for long.

Q. You mean to say you will lose your customers?

A. Yes. Of course they would not attend the Burmese films.

Q. Is that so?

A. Not only they won't attend Burmese films but even when we show Western films my customers will cease to attend.

Q. If this is introduced you will be losing the taste of the theatre?

A. Yes. By showing a Burmese film we will be losing the taste and the reputation of the theatre will be affected. People do not come there to waste their time. Even if there happened to be even 10 per cent. or 5 per cent. of the pictures which they did not like, that would tell upon the business to a great extent.

Q. As an exhibitor, in your experience of the taste of the European and Anglo-Indian public you think they will not stand a Burmese film even of short length?

A. No, they will not, unless, perhaps, it happens to be a topical film.

Q. Films of a horse race or something of that sort might perhaps be accepted?

A. Anything of topical interest may be taken.

Q. Have you got the same objection to being compelled to show any Empire films? Supposing a quota were imposed compelling every exhibitor to show a certain length of British Empire films. Does the same objection apply to this also?

A. I will have perhaps a little more than that. Perhaps, the Empire films coming as they do from Western countries may be more up-to-date. The Western customers won't drop off on that account. But they may not appeal to the Eastern customers.

Q. Which would you prefer to lose? Eastern customers or Western customers?

A. Neither, if possible.

Q. I suppose you have got sufficient experience of British films and non-British films?

A. Yes.

Q. Have you ever compared the way in which they treat social life? Supposing they want to depict a dancing hall, or the under-world. Do you think there is much difference in the ways in which the British producers treat the subject and the Indians or Los Angeles treat the same?

A. In dealing with that sort of subject I do not think there is much difference. There is not much appreciable difference.

Q. You mean to say that they treat the subject more or less in the same way? Americans, English or Burmans when they depict kissing, embracing, or sex relations do so more or less in the same way?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you go before the Censor Board yourself?

A. So far as Western films are concerned, all that is done either in Calcutta or in Bombay.

Q. They are sent here after they have been censored and probably exhibited in Bengal or other places?

A. Yes. I have very seldom to go before the Censor Board here. But in the case of all the films that come to us we have to apply to the President of the Censor Board for permission to exhibit them. All the films sent to me after being passed by the Bengal Board or the Bombay Board have to get the permission of the Board here. We send our application stating that we are exhibiting such and such a film. The Commissioner of Police has got the reports about those films from the Bombay or Bengal Board. If in any film a triangle is marked the Commissioner comes to know that there is some objection. If the Commissioner (the President of the Board) wants to see the film again with any members of his Board we must exhibit it to them before it is publicly exhibited.

Q. Is every exhibitor required to observe that rule?

A. Yes.

Q. You have to send a list of films?

A. Yes. We write an application like this: "We have the honour to state that the following films passed by the Censor Boards at Bengal, Bombay, etc., are to be exhibited in Rangoon (Burma). The respective certificates are attached herewith....." We write an application like that giving the names of the films and the numbers of the certificates as also the producing company's name and other particulars. We also give the approximate length of the films. As soon as it goes to the Commissioner's office the cinema clerk puts up the necessary papers, if there are any triangles, marks them out in red ink and submits them to the Commissioner. The Commissioner refers to the remarks against the pictures and passes orders. If he sees any objection he asks us to re-exhibit the films to the local board.

Q. How often does this sort of re-exhibition happen?

A. Very rarely.

Q. Wherefrom do you get your advertisements, hand-bills and posters, for the Western pictures?

A. Everything comes from the producers. We get them from Calcutta, our head office.

Q. Would it cause you any serious hardship if you were to send the posters and hand-bills to the Censor Board?

A. Yes, very serious hardship. It would be something like impracticable. I do not see first of all how this question has arisen. Nobody either in Burma or in any other place will show or advertise anything indecent or out of the way. In the many years' experience I have in the line, I have not so far seen the Commissioner once on this matter. Our posters and advertisements were never objected to till now.

Q. Did you receive any criticism from any private citizen or any association about the pictures or the posters?

A. No, I have not received any such criticism. Perhaps, the Vigilance Society spoke once or twice.

Q. For how many years have you been in Rangoon?

A. 14 years.

Q. Doing cinema business?

A. Yes.

Q. During the course of these years has any individual or any association addressed you about the objectionable nature of the posters? You say that there was some such thing from the Vigilance Society?

A. Yes, it was last year.

Q. Only once?

A. Yes, as far as I know.

Q. The Social Hygiene Delegation was here last year. Did you meet them?

A. I did not meet them.

Q. Have you seen extracts of their reports on the cinema in this country?

A. I have not seen it myself. I have heard about it.

Q. Did any of them get into touch with your producers at all? Either you or others? Had you any discussion with them?

A. Not with us in any way. I would like to point out one thing about posters. You see pictures like this (shows some calendars) sold all over the bazaar on open roads. This sort of sale is going on without objection. But if the same thing comes in a cinema it is objected to.

Q. Apparently these pictures (in the calendars) are reproduced from some art show?

A. Yes, I think so.

Mr. Neogy: Are these distributed free?

A. Yes. They are distributed free to their customers.

Q. What firms are these?

A. Perhaps a Chinese firm.

Colonel Crawford: You cater for Burman audiences, Indian audiences and also European and Anglo-Indian audiences?

A. Yes. Three theatres, Plaza, Royal and Excelsior exhibit Western films. Two theatres cater for Burmans.

Q. Do you exhibit Indian films also?

A. Yes.

Q. Are you able to find a sufficient supply of films to keep the two Burman theatres running?

A. Sometimes I do find some difficulty. At such times I put on some other production, either a Chinese or any other.

Q. What is your 6th house doing?

A. 3 houses show Western pictures, 2 Burman pictures. We find difficulty to find Burmese films for the other house also.

Q. What is that 6th house doing now? Showing Indian pictures?

A. Yes, regularly.

Q. You can take more Burmese films? It is a paying concern to you?

A. Not a very paying concern. I should say that it is the least paying of all.

Q. Why do you keep them then?

A. We want to increase the market and our business. We hope that we will be able to do so in due course of time. We want to encourage the Burmese films as far as possible.

Q. You want to develop the Burman market also from your point of view?

A. Yes. As you say we want the Burman to come and spend his money on this.

Q. Have you any theatres up-country?

A. Yes. One at Mandalay, one at Maymyo, one at Bassein, and we hire out our films at Moulmein. We opened at Bassein only very recently. Less than a month ago.

Q. Are these Burman pictures increasing in popularity or losing in popularity?

A. The novelty of the beginning has gone. There is now a distinct falling off. Unless they produce better pictures the industry is likely to go down altogether.

Q. Am I right in thinking that the production of better pictures means expenditure of more money?

A. Yes.

Q. If they spend more money on these pictures are they likely to get a substantial return?

A. It is not the expenditure of more money that is now required but the quality of the picture should be better.

Q. That is all right. A picture of better quality means expenditure of more money?

A. Yes.

Q. The moment they increase the expenditure from 20,000 to say 30,000 or 40,000 rupees in order to produce better quality pictures, will they be able to get a good return?

A. Perhaps, even within their present expenditure they might make some improvement in the quality.

Q. If they spend more money on pictures to make substantial improvements is the market in Burma sufficiently wide to carry the cost of production?

A. Yes. Besides one of the witnesses said yesterday that he was building a theatre. There are already many theatres here and it is just possible that one or two more might be built.

Mr. Green: Is the public prepared to support them? Will they come to these theatres?

A. If better pictures are produced I think the public will certainly support them.

Colonel Crawford: My doubt is still not cleared. It appears to me like this. If they were to spend Rs. 40,000 or Rs. 50,000 on a film, and that amount they will have to spend on a film of good quality, there would not be enough people going to the cinema to give them an adequate return?

A. Yes, Sir, there will always be people enough in Burma to pay them even more than the output if a really fine film is produced. People will be coming even for 3 weeks, 5 weeks or 7 weeks. The same thing will occur in the villages and all the other small towns also. That was the case with "The Thief of Baghdad." It was run for a good long time here.

Q. How long did you run it?

A. For 3 weeks. That was the only picture that ran for 3 weeks.

Chairman: I was told a Burman film "Motta Vaun" was run for 5 weeks?

A. In our opposition theatre it ran for 6 weeks.

Mr. Green: Was it really so very paying?

A. It was. It was paying to the owners.

Colonel Crawford: Supposing you spend one lakh of rupees in Burma on a good film. Do you think that you would be able to get a good return on that?

A. Yes, I think so, but if well spent!

Chairman: One question I would like to put to you. Supposing a Burman film is produced to satisfy the Western taste, say, for instance, the English or American. Do you think the same film will appeal to the Burman population also?

A. I do not think so.

Q. So you will have to treat the two separately. You cannot satisfy with one film both the international market and the Burmese?

A. No. Except very rarely. Yesterday it was said by one of the witnesses that Europeans indulged in kissing while the Burmans only smelt. Taking a scene where a Burman acts, others would only laugh at his smelling a woman. They would hardly understand the thing.

Colonel Crawford: At what rent do you offer theatres?

A. Rs. 125 to Rs. 165 a day.

Q. If you yourself exhibit can you make any more profit?

A. We make a little more, not much.

Q. It seems of course that one theatre pays and the other does not pay?

A. Yes, but on the whole by having a number of theatres we are able to economise the over-head charges. We distribute our over-head charges over all the theatres we possess and thereby we make some profit.

Q. The Chairman asked you sometime back about educational exhibition and you rightly pointed out that the public went to the cinema houses generally for entertainment and not for instruction. But there are many educational films which are of entertainment value too. Reels of the Topical Budget will be very interesting?

A. Yes, but they will be interesting only to the Western people generally and a few educated Indians and Burmans. There will be nearly 50 per cent. of the audience in the whole house, especially Indians and Burmans, who do not care to see those pictures. These topical reels will be most interesting only to the Britishers.

Q. You think, therefore, that these Western topical films will not be very much appreciated by the Burmans and Indians unless they are advanced and well-educated people?

A. Yes.

Q. Have you any evidence of that fact?

A. Oh, yes. I cannot say that such and such a nation does not like to see a picture of the Topical Budget. In a cinema house showing a picture of the Topical Budget, you will find almost the whole audience occupying the 4 annas and 8 annas seats talking with each other and not enjoying the picture. This, I think, is a sufficient proof to show that it does not interest them in the same way as a comic or dramatic film would interest them.

Q. You said in answer to a question put by the Chairman that there is no difference in the treatment of the subject as between the American producer and the British producer. How many British films have you shown?

A. We have shown quite a good many British pictures.

Q. Have you seen "The Flag Lieutenant"?

A. No.

Q. Is it a social drama?

A. It depicts naval dramatic features.

Q. We have heard one or two witnesses who said that the British films dealt with the subjects in a more wholesome manner?

A. I don't believe that. I think both of them adopt the same way of exhibiting a feature.

Q. In regard to the under-world scenes, there is not much difference between France or America; they are all bad. But does the Britisher draw on the under-world life as much as the American does?

A. All to the same extent I think. It depends upon the capability and the understanding of the producer.

Q. Not on the nation?

A. No; I do not think these producers are particularly trying to run down any white nation.

Q. I am talking simply about the standard or the method of handling the subject. You have not seen many English films?

A. I have seen quite a lot; but as I said it depends upon the way of producing. If the British experts have got very little experience and the American experts more experience, the latter may be producing the films in a better way. That is all.

Q. Do you import any films direct to Burma here?

A. All our films are imported either at Calcutta or Bombay, except the topical which we receive direct.

Q. You get the topical from London direct every week?

A. Yes.

Mr. Green: I see that you recommend that the customs duty should be reduced. You say: "Customs duty does not in any way help the indigenous production". If you reduce the customs duty, will you not render foreign films even cheaper than at present, and will you not enhance the competition between the imported films and the Indian or Burmese films?

A. I do not follow you very well.

Chairman: Supposing you remove or reduce the duty on imported films, will it not make the imported films cheaper and therefore liable to compete more easily with the Burmese films?

A. The Burmese films and the Indian films have got quite a different audience. They have quite a different value of production as well as proceeds.

Q. You consider that there is no real competition between western films and eastern films?

A. Certainly not.

Q. Do not the classes that go to see Indian and Burman films also go and see western films, say, the serials for example?

A. Yes, they do.

Q. Yet you are quite satisfied that there is no real competition?

A. But the people will always have their choice as to which would be the better to see.

Q. That is rather a different thing; you may quite legitimately argue that they should have the choice. But I want to know whether you are convinced that the removal of the duty will have no effect on the indigenous films?

A. No. There is no competition between the imported films and the locally produced films.

Q. In your answer to question No. 25, you point out "all pictures imported into India are passed by censors in America or Great Britain". Can you give me your authority for that statement?

A. You will find on all American films something showing that the films were passed by the board.

Q. Do you know what the arrangements for censorship in America are?

A. I was told that in the first place the producers themselves have a separate department.

Q. I am only asking if you have any direct official knowledge on the subject?

A. I say that the producers themselves, i.e., the cinema film producers have got their own board appointed by themselves which passes the films. If the board is of the opinion that a particular picture will appeal only to 80 or 90 per cent. of the people and not to cent. per cent., the board, which is their own concern, will try to find out if it is possible to make the film universally popular, and get 100 per cent. market.

Q. Is there any official censorship in America, to your knowledge?

A. Yes, there is.

Q. There I think you are mistaken. There is a trade censor but not an official censor. Similarly, do you know whether there is an official censorship in Great Britain?

A. I have not very much personal knowledge of those places.

Chairman: Do you get anything with the films to show by whom it was passed, either from America or from England?

A. Most of the films have the title "Passed by the American Board of Review" or "Passed by the British Board of Censors".

Q. They have a trailer?

A. Yes.

Q. From that you can say by whom it was passed?

A. Yes. Most of them have a trailer.

Mr. Green: In answer to question 26, you indicate the particular film to which objection is taken, the one about Lord Buddha. The film was willingly withdrawn by you to prevent discussion?

A. It was suspended as soon as I was told that there was objection from the public, and I did not want to offend the public, so I withdrew it.

Q. You did not want to get unpopularity for your cinemas by showing anything contrary to the public taste?

A. No.

Q. Still less would you desire to show a film which would cause a disturbance of the peace?

A. Certainly.

Q. In answer to question No. 40, you say. "Posters and photos are exact duplications of the scenes on the films, and when the films are passed for exhibition, what need could be there for censorship of posters as well". Granted that the photos are correct, do you seriously suggest that posters are exact representations of scenes on the film?

A. Posters are exact representations. So far as the scenes are concerned, they are produced in an artistic way.

Q. I want to know whether the poster is an exact representation of any part of the film?

A. I think most of the posters, at least 75 per cent. or 80 per cent. or 90 per cent. of them will be an exact reproduction of the film.

Q. That I grant, but what about the remaining 10 per cent.?

A. That will be produced in an artistic way. They are produced in different sizes of posters.

Q. Do you then agree that in some cases posters are really different from the screen version or from the actual photographs?

A. I do not think I have come across any poster like that.

Chairman: The film may show something in a small size whereas the poster may show it in a very big size?

A. The poster is only a drawing. First of all, there is a drawing which is to be passed by experts, then it is put in that form.

Q. So the poster does not represent the film in some respects?

A. My point is that in most cases, in 80 per cent. at least, it does represent it. In some cases, of course, it does not.

Mr. Neogy: You have been in Rangoon for the last 14 years?

A. Yes.

Q. Always connected with Madan theatres?

A. Yes.

Q. What was the number of cinema theatres when you first came out here?

A. We and the Cinema de Paris started in the same year, i.e., 1913.

Q. These were the only two at that time?

A. Yes.

Q. You acquired the Cinema de Paris later?

A. Yes.

Q. Who controls it?

A. That plot was taken up by the Corporation after about ten years and a separate body of proprietors are now controlling it.

Q. You have now added five more to your number since then?

A. Yes.

Q. Were they all started only by you or did you take over any of those five?

A. We started the Excelsior and we started the New Elphinstone; that was a replacement of our own theatre. The others were all taken over.

Q. They failed and you took them over?

A. They were put on the market and we took them over.

Q. You acquired them gradually?

A. Yes.

Q. Can you give us an idea of the variation of rent of these picture houses during these years? How has the rate varied? Has it gone on increasing?

A. It has gone on increasing according to the time and according to the increase of business, in several directions. At that time there were no Burmese, Chinese or Indian productions. Only serials were shown. We were satisfied with that then, and so we were holding to that house.

Q. What is the rent that you have offered for the Globe?

A. It is Rs. 3,750.

Q. What is the nearest approach to this amount that you pay as rent for any other of your theatres?

A. Rs. 2,150 or Rs. 2,250 for the Royal theatre, that we took in 1924.

Q. Is it of the same capacity and standard? Which is better?

A. The Globe is better and bigger because it has got a stage and is in a very good locality.

Q. When was the lease entered into for the Royal?

A. In 1924.

Q. For how many years will it run?

A. Till 1929, and then we have two years' option.

Q. For how many years have you taken over the Globe?

A. Five years.

Chairman: Do you think you will be able to use it at all at a profit?

A. I have just replied to the point. We do not expect a very big profit; we can have only very little profit as we are paying very high rent.

Mr. Neogy: So far as the Globe is concerned, was yours the first offer?

A. No; I should say mine was perhaps the last offer, so far as I was told.

Q. Was the Globe advertised in the Press?

A. Yes. I have got the advertisement here.

Q. You tendered after the others had tendered?

A. Yes.

Q. One of your ideas is to place the Globe at the disposal of any Indian theatrical company that might care to utilise it?

A. Not to any Indian theatrical company. We may run it ourselves. We have got three Indian theatrical companies ourselves.

Q. I heard that Globe was at one time the actual stage for some theatrical concern?

A. Yes. Mr. J. F. Madan himself had used the theatre in 1908 and we were paying at that time only Rs. 300 as rent.

Q. And your idea is to revert to that position, that is to utilise it as a stage for Indian dramatic purposes?

A. It is quite a different thing whether we will be able to carry out our intentions.

Chairman: But the immediate result is that the Globe will have no place to go to?

A. We are very sorry, but we cannot help it, from a business point of view. There is a new theatre nearly ready and available to anyone.

Mr. Neogy: With regard to the Burmese productions, you have mentioned lack of technical advisers as one of the difficulties. In what branches is there such lack?

A. In scenario writing, in photography; even in writing suitable Burmese stories they have very few people.

Q. When you advocate the idea of a Government studio being let out to private producers, do you contemplate that technical advisers should be provided by the Government as a part of the establishment in the studio?

A. It is a Government studio, so it must be controlled by them.

Q. That is to say, you expect a full complement of expert staff to be attached to the Government studio for being utilised by the private producers?

A. That Government studio will be carrying on special propaganda work. It will not be in any way competing with private business.

Q. And the studio will be let out and the services of the experts would be made available to the private producers when the studio is otherwise unoccupied?

A. Yes.

Q. There are two or three better class producers here who are carrying on the business on a more or less permanent footing. Is that so?

A. Yes.

Q. The steadier class, I mean?

A. Yes.

Q. What amount of capital have they put in, have you any idea?

A. I have no information.

Q. Do you think that a producing concern which is already turning out, say, half a dozen or eight films a year, would like to depend entirely upon what use they could make of a Government studio, when that studio would be available to them only during intervals?

A. I do not follow you very well.

Q. The Government studio would be primarily concerned with the production of Government films?

A. Yes.

Q. It would therefore be available to the private producers only when the studio has not got Government work?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you think these producers who have been producing on a regular scale a definite number of films every year would rather depend upon the precarious use of the Government studio, than upon their own arrangements?

A. It is left for them to decide.

Q. But what is your idea? Do you think it is quite likely?

A. If they depend on one studio and if there are about a dozen companies to start work all at the same time, naturally they cannot get the same studio.

Q. I am thinking of the steadier concerns, i.e., those that have undertaken production on a regular scale?

A. If the Government charge a low rate for the studio and induce the film producers to make the films there, why should they not utilise the studio?

Q. Leave alone the question of charges; that is another point. I want to know whether the facilities that the producers would get in a Government studio would be so very dependable as to enable them to do away with their own arrangements? Could they depend exclusively upon the use of such a precarious Government studio?

A. If the Government studio is entirely fitted for their requirements, I think the producers will.

Q. But it will not be always available for their use?

A. Whenever it is available, those who need it, will certainly go there.

Q. Do you think that those who want to produce half a dozen or eight or ten pictures a year, will be able to depend exclusively on such a Government studio?

A. That will depend on.....

Chairman: If they are to produce eight or ten pictures by themselves, would they need to come to a Government studio, which is only precarious?

A. I do not think so.

Mr. Neogy: So, the only people who could take advantage of such a Government studio would be those mushroom firms which produce a picture during one year and then disappear from the scene. It is for the benefit of that class of producers that you advocate a Government studio?

A. But even the bigger producers at certain times will need the assistance of the Government studio, if available.

Q. And the Government experts there?

A. Yes.

Q. At the same time they must have their own arrangements?

A. Of course they cannot entirely depend on the Government studio; they must have their own studios running side by side with the Government studio.

Q. From that point of view, their difficulty about capital would not be obviated by the starting of a Government studio? If they have to run their own studios parallel with the Government studio, they will have to find capital for them?

A. Yes.

Q. Their only advantage will be that they will get the services of the experts in the Government studio whenever necessary?

A. Yes, as well as the complete equipment there.

Q. As regards printing and editing, do you think that any decent producing concern can ever conduct its business without having a development plant of its own?

A. I do not think so.

Q. So even from that point of view, the Government studio will be of doubtful benefit to the private producers?

A. Yes.

Q. What do you think will be the cost of such a Government studio as you have in mind, have you any idea?

A. I have no knowledge about it.

Q. The cost of entertaining the staff that you contemplate?

A. Mr. J. J. Madan who has just been to America can give the approximate cost, I have no knowledge about it.

Q. When you expect an expert staff to be provided by the Government, you contemplate the very best experts? Is that so?

A. Yes.

Q. Have you, as a business man, considered the possibility of the Government of Burma securing the services of such experts?

A. I do not think it would be possible to get the very best experts, because they may perhaps have to be paid by thousands of dollars.

Q. We have been told by other witnesses in other parts of the country that it would not be worth while to go in for any but the very best experts, and that they would much rather depend on the people who have already got the training in India to develop on their own lines, than have second-rate experts?

A. If you are expecting men like Cecil de Mille who produced "The Ten Commandments", or D. W. Griffith, those people are earning nothing less than a million dollars a year in America and you can never get their services in India.

Q. Your Calcutta office had experience of second-rate experts too. That was not very happy, I am told. But supposing the smaller companies were to take advantage of the Government studio without having any studio or their own or any outfit of their own, what rent would you expect Government to charge them for the use of their studio? Supposing you had a studio of your own which you were prepared to let out to people, you would charge a rent which would be sufficient for you to cover your expenses, interest charges and things of that kind and leave you a margin of profit?

A. Yes.

Q. You would expect the Government to charge the smaller private producers a rent not less than what you would charge under the circumstances?

A. I would like them to charge an economic rent by way of encouraging the industry.

Q. If you have the idea of encouraging the industry through the agency of a Government studio by fixing less than the economic rent, to that extent would not the Government studio be competing with the private producers of the steadier kind who have already supplied themselves with their own studio?

A. No.

Q. The Government in so far as they allow more favourable treatment to the smaller private producers, would not be aiding in such unfair competition? That is to say, the smaller producer would be at an advantage over the bigger producer who has supplied himself with a full equipment?

A. But will not the Government have sufficient knowledge as to whether they are doing the right thing or the wrong thing?

Q. Leaving aside Government's judgment in this connection, what would you advise the Government to do in these circumstances?

A. It depends upon the conditions of the time. How can we predict anything? If the people are satisfied that the Government's intention is really to encourage the industry and nothing else, there should be no complaint from the people.

Q. Do you mean to say they should encourage the mushroom concerns?

A. Not encourage the mushroom concerns exactly, on the contrary those who are taking the profession seriously. I say they should encourage the industry in the country. In that case there will be no complaint from the people at all.

Q. But in any case you are opposed to any unfair competition between one producer and another. Is that your position?

A. Yes. Sure. I want to give my opinion on certain points which I have not answered in reply to the questionnaire. But I do not like to detain other witnesses.

Chairman: What is it you want to say?

A. I want to say something about the local difficulties in respect of censoring.

Q. You want to say something about censorship and what else?

A. You had a talk yesterday about pirated copies of films.

Q. It is better you send us a written memorandum on all the points you want to add.

Supplementary Written Statement of Mr. D. A. NARIMAN, Manager, Madan Theatres, Ltd., Burma Circuit, dated Rangoon, the 1st February 1928.

(1) In the first place I beg to draw your attention to the oral and written evidence of Mr. Sidhwa of the Globe Cinema, Rangoon, and the invectives and denunciations he hurled against the Madan Theatres. Apart from the fact, that Mr. Sidhwa's references to Madan Theatres, were wholly irrelevant to the Committee's present purpose and scope of enquiry we think it's most improper for Mr. Sidhwa, to have taken undue advantage of the Committee's presence here to make inaccurate, defamatory and damaging statements against a competitor in business, out of personal pique and trade jealousy.

Though you, Sir, were constrained to point out to Mr. Sidhwa, in course of his oral evidence, that "his allegations and complaints about alleged undue competition in the business were not relevant to the purpose of the Committee," and that the State does not interfere in private business or competition, yet I should like to request you to record my protest against Mr. Sidhwa's unjustified insinuations against Madan Theatres, and to permit me this opportunity to meet his statements out of a sense of duty to our shareholders and to the Cinema Industry in particular.

(1) The advertisement regarding the lease of the Globe Theatre appeared in "Rangoon Times" and "Rangoon Daily News" on and from 8th August 1927. There was no opportunity provided me in the course of my oral evidence to meet the assertions made by Mr. Sidhwa regarding the transactions relating to the Globe, but I was enabled to lay before you Sir, proof that the advertisements relating to the lease of the Globe Theatre were not a mere blind or

preconceived artifice. If the members of your committee desire to inspect my record of proof that I laid before your goodself, I shall be only too pleased to forward the same.

(2) We came to know four days later, i.e., on the 11th that there were many applications for it, and the Burmese Favourite Company was topping the list by their offer of Rs. 3,500. (3) We wired and informed our Calcutta H. O. on the same date, and (4) got their sanction to offer Rs. 3,750. We wrote to the landlords on the 12th, (5) The landlords firm being a limited company called a special meeting of the Directors and accepted our offer on the 13th and informed us of the same, (6) We confirmed their letter on the 14th.

As regards the Globe it is our intention to establish a first class house for Indian Theatrical companies, Rangoon, has not been fortunate enough to be entertained for a number of years now, by an Indian theatrical company of any merit and the demand for it is an ever increasing one. The Globe was the most suitable site and its structure had always been previously utilized by Indian Theatrical concerns. It was therefore incumbent on us to acquire this site and had other offers of almost equal amount not been made by such concerns as the Burmese Favourite Co. Mr. Sidhwa would have not had the privilege of utilising our position for the public justification of his own disappointment.

As will appear later the rent paid is by no means exorbitant considering the return that is available either by the use or hire of the hall for theatrical or cinema purposes the proceeds as pointed out by Mr. Green, to Mr. Sidhwa in the course of the latter's oral evidence obtained from exhibition of pictures of real merit which we had every facility to provide, in adequate numbers, would obviate the rent ever being a cause of anxiety to us. Moreover in the case of a first class theatrical show, a full house could easily produce a gross return of Rs. 3,000 per day, whereas a full cinema house would yield only Rs. 500 as the prices of seats in a cinema show range from annas four to Rs. 3, while in that of a theatrical performance, they range from Re. 1 to Rs. 10.

Besides the evidence recorded by the Committee make it evident that the value of the properties have gone up immensely, and the standard of rent has of itself risen, in the last ten years or so, owing to the growth of the City of Rangoon, and business thereof, and that the rise was in no way due to inflations but due to the ordinary laws of supply and demand.

I propose to deal secondly with the factor which is foremost in the hearts of the Cinema going public of this province, viz., the development and expansion of the indigenous cinematographic industry. In this connection Mr. Sidhwa has very generously showered upon us the unwarranted and preconceived ideas of an envious competitor. Unfortunately he has by his hasty judgment failed to realise the basis of the present situation, a factor which of itself entirely refutes his preconceived notions. He has suggested that we are attempting to handicap the indigenous industry.

According to the evidence of Mr. Atchia of the Burma Film Service and of U. Ba Nyun, the President of the Burma Film Producers Association, the indigenous film industry is run on borrowed capital and is entirely dependent on the financial help of Indian money-lenders. Their dependence is so complete that not only have they to subscribe their consent to the levy of 24 per cent. interest per annum but that outside Rangoon, the very distribution of most of these productions is controlled by these financiers who obtain a further profit therefrom by claiming 10 per cent. on the proceeds of exhibition.

It is therefore the financial embarrassment that is the main drawback in the development of the indigenous industry and Madan Theatres have always realised this factor and have helped to ameliorate the situation. Unlike other exhibitors, Madan Theatres have been utilizing their position towards the encouragement of the Burma Film Industry often at a disadvantage to themselves.

It has been contended that the acquisition of new cinema houses at Rangoon by Madans has worked to the detriment of the Burma Film Industry, but it is hardly realized that the Madan Theatres provide two theatres for the exhibition of Burmese films and lease their halls to producers of Burmese Films at a rate far below that charged by other cinema concerns. At one time the old Cinema-de Paris, which did not belong to Madans used to charge the Burmese film-producers Rs. 300 per day for the hire of their hall. If it be compared with what we are charging the same producers to-day, viz., 30 per cent. of the gross proceeds, that often runs as low as Rs. 70, one would realize the depth of our earnest desire to help the indigenous industry. The producers as evidenced by the statement of Messrs. Samuels, Limited well appreciate this consideration and do not attribute to our acquisition of theatres, any ungenerous motive. In fact it is in the best interest of the local industry that we with the halls at our disposal are able to facilitate the exhibition and production of their Burmese and Indian films.

Even in the matter of Indian productions Madan Theatres have lent a helping hand and despite the fact that we ourselves are producing Indian films, the production of five other Indian producing concerns are frequently exhibited at our theatres. In view of these facts it would be idle for any one to contend that Madans are exercising their advantageous position to the detriment of other film-producing concerns.

Mr. Sidhwa has next contended that the acquisition of new theatres has been dictated by a desire to oust competitors. We are never subjected ourselves to such an uneconomical policy and the very fact that the Globe Theatres, Limited, of which Mr. Sidhwa is one of the Managing Directors has been able to spring up from a mere financial venture into a powerful concern, with several other branches at important centres in Burma and India, is itself a refutation of his statement. In his own words the Globe Theatres have within the ten years of their existence not only established branches but have obtained more or less exclusive control of as many as "thirty-five" different theatres for the presentation of their films.

How strange and ridiculous it is that Mr. Sidhwa in face of these facts should suggest to your committee to restrict the expansion of our business, that he may profit by the same. Furthermore in this connection mention has been made of the high prices paid by us for our recent purchases—Queen's (now called "The Star") and the Plaza.

Again Mr. Sidhwa has completely misrepresented our transaction of the Star Cinema, knowing perfectly well that the rent at which we acquired it in 1927, viz., Rs. 1,600 (for an entirely furnished theatre, and the landlord to pay taxes, etc.), is the lowest prevailing for cinema houses in Rangoon.

This is all the more noteworthy in that the hall just opposite the star, viz., the Olympia run by Mr. E. Fernandez is rented for Rs. 3,000 a month.

It may interest you to note that as regards the "Star" it's a matter of record that Mr. Sidhwa's own offer was in excess of ours though he was too late to secure it.

Mr. Sidhwa's statement about our attempt to enjoy a position of dictation is all the more absurd when it is realised that whereas the former occupiers of the Star, charged Burmese Film Producers Rs. 150 per day we charged them at rates ranging from Rs. 125 to Rs. 140 per day, and in addition we granted them the option of subscribing to our usual terms, i.e., 30 per cent. of the gross proceeds, a facility which they are often able to turn to great advantage.

It has been assumed by Mr. Sidhwa for the purposes of his allegation of dictation that we have subjected ourselves to extraordinary liability in the matter of rent in respect of recent acquisitions. It has evidently suited his purposes to overlook the fact that the standard of rent has of itself risen with the popularity of cinema concerns and that its rise is nowise due to competitive inflation. That we have been in nowise extravagant and have merely adapted ourselves to the changes effected by the normal operation of the laws of supply and demand is readily apparent on a consideration of the

following particulars. Rs. 1,05,000 for the Plaza which was acquired at a public auction held by the Official Receiver at first seems exorbitant. But when the terms of the lease are considered, which provide of the return to us of $\frac{1}{4}$ the value of the building at the termination of the lease it is apparent that the rent calculated does not exceed Rs. 1,500 a month.

Its acquisition on these terms cannot be considered any thing but highly advantageous when we consider that the previous occupier Mr. Fernandez had for the past years been paying Rs. 2,600 a month for it, and was using it as his cinema house the Majestic.

Such a rent is by no means extraordinary for a house exhibiting western productions when we realize that even producers of Burmese Films find it profitable to pay Rs. 150 per day for the hire of a hall.

Then again Messrs. Kink Cinema Company have leased the vacant site near the Excelsior Theatre at Rs. 1,000 per mensem and having constructed a hall thereon have now been able to rent it for a long term at the rate of Rs. 160 per day to exhibitors of Burmese Films. Besides there are altogether four houses (including the Olympia) for the display of Burmese films. As these houses have been owned till now and in some instances still are owned by separate owners. How can the standard of rent paid by them on which the rental value of the respective properties is calculated be said to be subject to arbitrary control?

From the oral evidences I beg to draw your attention to another important factor that really affects the cinema industry. The lack of restrictions on the importation of pirated copies of films imposes a heavy hardship on exhibitors, who stake considerable sums to provide the public with a picture of real merit. The difficulties, loss and disadvantages to which an exhibitor is subject by such unfair importation is apparent from the following. A few years ago we obtained the film known as the "Son of Tarzan" at a cost of over Rs. 55,000. Mr. E. A. Fernandez, realizing the opportunity presented by the popularity of this picture managed to obtain and import in Rangoon, in direct infringement of our rights a pirated copy of the same picture, which he had succeeded in getting for the small sum of Rs. 3,500. We tried to obtain redress but without avail. We instituted legal proceedings and the matter was prolonged for two years. It was not until the High Court had directed the issue of commissions to several parties in England and America, that Mr. Fernandez thought it best to give in and acknowledged our rights. But there the matter ended without our being in a position either to recover our expenses or compensation for the loss involved by the infringement of our rights, whereas the question of illicit importation of pirated copies still remains unsolved.

Illicit importation is the bugbear of an enterprising exhibitor and by endangering the prospects of fair return in the case of pictures of exceptional merit which are necessarily very costly, seriously affects the standard and quality of cinema productions.

The Commissioner of Police as Chairman of the Provincial Cinema Board, has apparently, erroneously stated in his evidence that he has not received any complaint about pirated copies, for only a few months ago it was incumbent on me individually to ask for his assistance by the withholding of the issue of censorship certificates in the case of pirated copies of our exclusive pictures such as "Thief of Baghdad," "Don Q Son of Zorro," "Ben Hur" etc. (that we were reported as being on their way to this country).

Individual representation by us, of this nature has been necessary owing to the absence of an effective association to safeguard the interests of the industry on the whole. The Burma Cinema Trades Association of which Mr. Sidhwa is President exists only in name. It's present members are only three, Mr. Sidhwa, myself, and one.

For the last three or four years there have been no meetings of the Association. No subscriptions have been paid or collected and no transactions in the interests of the Cinema Industry effected by it. From its very inception the Association did not gain strength owing to distrust and suspicion and

owing to the lack of support from other cinema concerns in Burma who preferred to remain aloof not having anything to lose thereby.

Mr. Sidhwa's attempt in his written statement to gain importance under the style of the President of the Burma Cinema Trades Association is in consequence as frivolous, as all the rash statements, we have had out of a sense of duty to meet herein.

Written Statement of Mrs. BULKELEY, Honorary Secretary of the National Council of Women in Burma.

NOTE.—These replies are to be regarded as my individual opinion. The National Council of Women has given expression to its opinion in the Report on the standard of films shown in Burma already submitted to you.

1. None.
2. (a) I imagine a considerable number of children under fourteen attend, since it is customary for Burmans to attend theatrical and other performances "en famille".
3. Comics and films with plenty of action and excitement.
4. No, because too many inferior films are shown.
5. Burmese films are produced locally and are certainly popular.
6. (a) I think Burmans have acquired a taste for bad Western films, but that if there were a good supply of Burmese films depicting stories from National Literature, History and Mythology, they would become very popular.
- (b) Stories from National Literature and History.
8. (a) No.
- (b) Block and blind booking—Legislation might be tried as is being done in England.
9. I know nothing about prices. There is a decided tendency to monopoly.
10. Yes, the systems of block and blind booking do exist in Burma. The system of block and blind booking militates against the showing of the best pictures, because if the exhibitors are too discriminating they lose money on the block. The disadvantage to the public is that they see inferior films. The system of monopoly keeps up prices and therefore it is an advantage to the trade but not to the public.
11. None in the case of foreign-produced films, unless they send Agents to do so. A Central Distributing Agency for India and Burma would overcome this difficulty and if properly organised should improve the standard of films shown and reduce the cost to the public.
14. The production of specialised Educational films could probably not be undertaken by the film industry in this country at present. Such films would I think be popular if shown free of charge.
19. I have no real knowledge, but judging by the outside appearance of such film studios as I have seen, I should say the cost is negligible compared to that of films produced in Western countries.
21. I mistrust any monopoly whether State or otherwise, but I think some centralised neutral distributing agency which should combine the minimum of actual censorship with sound criticism for the benefit of exhibitors would be an advantage.
22. I should advocate the showing of British films, not from the standpoint of Imperial preference, but with the object of attaining a better understanding between India and Great Britain, and more particularly with a view to getting a better standard of Western films shown in this country. It is admitted in America that (a) "the motion picture institution is primarily an

industry", not an art, and in that country the majority of films are produced to appeal to the large masses of illiterate immigrants from Central Europe for whom it is the only common medium of interpretation and it is admitted that (b) "the average movie-goer intelligence is that of a 14 year old child."*

24. (a) Yes.

(b) Not as far as I know.

(c) Films which give a misleading idea of the life and standard of any class or section of people must be harmful both to those misrepresented and to those without a sufficient background of knowledge to correct the false impression. It lowers the prestige of those misrepresented and gives them a grievance; to those who are misled it gives a false foundation for their ideas about life and people.

(d) (1) Censorship is not always adequate.

(2) In the case of crime films, censorship is no cure, it is the treatment of the whole film that is important.

(e) There is a strong belief that the increase of crime in Burma is due to the Cinema, but I do not think this can be proved except in a few individual cases.

25. Most certainly.

26. (a) Yes.

(b) The Buddhist Societies in Burma disapproved of the life of Lord Buddha which, I believe, was very popular in India. I have seen films based on Biblical History which offended me; I think the Ten Commandments was one of those films in which the debauchery of the Children of Israel during Moses' absence on Mount Sinai was quite disproportionately emphasised, rendering the film quite unsuitable for school children who might otherwise have benefited by seeing it. I can imagine that Roman Catholics might have objected to the "White Sister".

27. (a) The majority of films of the Los Angeles type depicting scenes of extravagance and luxury must tend to misrepresent normal Western civilisation and lower it in the eyes of Indians and Burmans. Films misrepresenting Western life must be misunderstood by uneducated Indians and Burmans. It is very natural that they should object to political subordination to a people whom they believe to resemble those depicted in such films. Western films which give a true picture of the best in Western life could only have beneficial results.

(b) I do not know of any.

28. (a) Yes, over-sensational films and those with a strong "sex appeal" that is, nearly all.

(b) Yes, particularly those which emphasise the physical side of sex and those which ignore the moral code, and law of cause and effect.

29. I am of opinion that certification of films, as for adults only, would only incite adolescents to seek admission to them.

30. I think the children's cinema is a better solution because there is no justification for excluding from the ordinary performance films which are unsuitable for children. A well arranged children's performance would soon become as popular with their parents and discerning adults as the present type of exhibition. I should like to see children under fourteen excluded from all but children's performances. Such Indians as I have discussed this matter with seem to think that for this country the limit should be twelve years.

31. Censorship is only a poor remedy for bad work in the studios, but as things are at present it cannot be dispensed with.

* See "The Motion Picture in its Economic and Social Aspects" (November 1926 number of "The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science.")

(a) P. 19.—"The Motion Picture" by Tery Ramsaye.

(b) P. 72.—"Literature and the Motion Picture" by Arthur Edwin Krows.

32. No. I have a great respect for our Board of Censors but under the present system it rarely functions except in viewing locally produced films. Films which have received a certificate in India are not examined here unless a complaint is received. I think the local Board of Censors should be increased in number and include more women if the work that it is called upon to do could justify the expense.

33. (a) If the censorship is strict without being wise, no doubt it would interfere unreasonably.

(b), (c) Such a censorship might.

34. (a) I think a Central Censorship Board is desirable but I would keep the Provincial Board for Burma at least since Burmese representation on the Central Board would be impossible.

1. It is unsatisfactory to have such different standards of censorship in the different provinces.

2. I should think it would be a convenience to the trade.

3. The Central Board should be representative of all races and both sexes should include some young people and representatives of the trade.

4. It must of course be in India, presumably Bombay or Calcutta.

(b) I cannot speak for the other provinces but for reason (1) given above, for all locally produced films, a Provincial Board in Burma is a necessity.

(c) I think the Governments should nominate one or two members on each Board.

(d) As far as possible from the taxes on films.

35. (a) As far as I know, yes, but more women should be added.

(b) No, the perfect Censor would be hard to find in a country with so many different races and classes to satisfy.

36. (a) I think not. I do not know what qualifications the present Inspectors have, but they need a good education, considerable artistic taste and knowledge of life and people, and of what is suitable for children and young people.

(b) Yes, I would prefer the films to be examined by members of the Board. I think public spirited people of suitable standing will be available, particularly if more women are appointed who have rather more leisure.

37. (a) The safeguards are not adequate. A film may have run several nights before action can be taken on any objection that is made.

(b) Yes.

38. Such incidents have been brought to my notice. See notes by Mr. Murray in the evidence appended to the Report on the Standard of Films shown in Burma, sent to you by the National Council of Women.

40. Yes certainly, I would have the handbills and advertisements submitted to the Board of Censors when the film is viewed for certification, and sent to the Provincial Board with the copy of the certificate already received.

Yes, I have seen objectionable advertisements unduly emphasising the sensual appeal of films, but my chief quarrel with the advertisements is that they give one no idea of the film which they advertise.

41. I only go to cinemas when I think they are worth seeing. They are certainly more worth seeing than there used to be some years ago, but I cannot say whether the percentage of good films is greater than formerly.

42. I should like members of the trade to sit on all censorship Boards. They would then get some idea of the standards expected.

44. The Press could assist greatly by publishing real criticisms of the films as is done in some of the English papers. At present they confine themselves for the most part to unintelligent eulogy.

45. (b) I should say registration would be desirable, particularly as the local production increases.

**Oral Evidence of Mrs. M. FRASER and Mrs. E. MARTIN-JONES,
Representing the National Council of Women, Burma, on Friday,
the 20th January 1928.**

Chairman: Both of you are members of the National Council of Women. You have come here as representatives of that association?

A. Yes.

Q. Which of you is Mrs. Bulkley?

A. She is not here. She had to go upcountry.

Q. And now this statement sent by Mrs. Bulkley has been passed by the National Board?

A. No: the report of the Sub-Committee has been.

Q. I want to know whether it has been placed before the Board?

A. The statement is her own individual opinion.

Q. That has nothing to do with you?

A. No.

Q. Both of you agree with the report of the Sub-Committee which was forwarded to us?

A. Yes.

Q. You support that report in its entirety?

A. Yes. We do.

Q. May I know how often you go to the cinema?

Mrs. Fraser: I go once a week.

Mrs. Martin-Jones: I go once a fortnight.

Q. I suppose you go to the western films?

A. I have been to Burmese films.

Q. You see both Chinese and Burmese?

A. I have been three times to Burmese cinemas. I am going to a Chinese film this week.

Q. Otherwise you see the western films? About once a fortnight?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you go there, as Mrs. Bulkley says, definitely to see whether it is worth seeing?

A. No; we go there for an enjoyable evening.

Q. How do you judge it?

A. According to the way I enjoy it.

Q. What I want to know is what percentage of them which you saw contained scenes of domestic life or social life between man and woman showing the relationship between the sexes?

A. In nearly all of them there are some domestic scenes.

Q. Including the serials?

A. I do not, as a rule, go to the serials.

Q. Nor the comic exhibit?

A. We like good comics such as those of Harold Lloyd.

Q. You take exception in respect of another film in that report of the Sub-Committee. I want to see how often you have come across any objectionable films of that sort?

A. I do not know whether I remember the actual names of the ones which I have seen. But in the one that I saw the scenes were of such a nature that they were objectionable for any audience, whether western or eastern.

Q. Have you seen British films depicting social life and also American films?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you find any difference?

A. The report gives it.

Q. That you are prepared to support?

A. Yes.

Q. You have no objection to films in which the British producer deals with social life? You are making the statement as a representative of the National Council of Women?

A. We thought on the whole that the British producer was a little less blatant in his treatment than the Los Angeles producer.

Q. You think such films are objectionable on account of the effects produced on the minds of the public?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you think there is any difference considered from that point of view?

A. No.

Q. So you don't mind the way in which British films depict social life?

A. I have the same objection to some of them.

Q. You are not satisfied with the British productions?

A. They are equally objectionable, some of them.

Q. Do you pause to consider whether it is English, American, German or Burmese?

A. Yes. I am interested in the question of cinema production as a whole.

Q. Which kind do you prefer?

A. The most artistic film I have seen in Rangoon has been a German production.

Q. Have you seen the under-world life depicted in the British film? Have you seen "The Rat"?

A. No.

Mrs. Fraser: I think I saw it. I do not like the film.

Q. That is a recent English production. You have the same objection to it as you have to the American productions? You are not here to advocate any one industry? You are here to safeguard morals of the public?

A. I think that is only a very small side of it.

Q. On reading the report of Mrs. Bulkley there seems to be some special pleading for the British production in preference to the American production?

A. We have seen Mrs. Bulkley's statement.

Q. That is what I want to get at. From your point of view do you think the Burman people or the Indians in Burma understand rightly what they see of actual life in the west as they see you here, what the people themselves do? Your mixed dancing?

A. I know they don't understand.

Q. But still you do not stop dancing?

A. It is impossible. I don't wish to.

Q. Some people are likely to misunderstand anything. You do not advise us to take any steps on that ground?

A. No.

Q. For instance, the modern habits of dress. Do you think the Burmese people understand it aright?

A. No. But may I say this much in regard to the safeguarding of public morals. I do not think that is the idea in the report. The whole idea is to raise the standard from an artistic point of view as well as from the moral. There is no question of safeguarding the morals of the general public. We do not presume to do any such thing. As citizens we are all interested in

morals. If we really see a public evil, we are bound to protest against it. We know there is evil produced by the cinema.

Q. In what?

A. In some of the things that we have mentioned in this report. The question of crime particularly.

Q. Do you attach greater importance to crime pictures or to sex pictures? In the mind of the Council which has greater importance?

A. I think we are equally divided on this point as a Committee. I think practically it was 50 per cent. for the evils of crime and 50 per cent. for the evils of sex.

Q. So that your considered opinion is that crime is either increased or new methods are invented for it because of the cinema?

A. As a committee we have put down our views in our report. We do consider it so.

Q. We want to know your opinion?

A. It is not a matter of individual opinion. It is a matter for the committee. I think you will find in the report that crime has increased in Burma and it has often been put down to the cinema.

Q. I want to know on what you base that opinion. Do you share in that opinion at all? I suppose there was a lot of criticism of your report in the local press?

A. A great deal.

Q. The President of the Censor Board wrote to the press saying that you did not represent the view correctly?

A. That is true.

Q. I should like to know what your feeling is as regards crime. Do you think really that the cinema is responsible for producing crime in this Province?

Mrs. Martin-Jones: I am not in a position to judge at all.

Q. So also in your case, Mrs. Fraser?

A. I think that from the time I have been in this country which is 25 years and have watched the cinema from the beginning, (I do not say that I have studied the question by any means), and the view I hold is that the cinema has been in many cases responsible for increase in crime.

Q. You would not be satisfied with the Police officers' opinion to the contrary?

A. I would be glad of the educationalists' views on the subject.

Q. As regards sex films what are the evil effects, you think, which are produced on the people of this country?

A. We object to the inartistic treatment of certain sex films. I think you notice that we do not talk a great deal about it but we just content ourselves with saying that such pictures are provocative of sexual excitement and are not suitable for children. We do not wish to enlarge on the question.

Q. You think a bad public taste has been created in the country by the Western cinemas?

A. Yes. From the first introduction of the film into this country second and third rate films have been imported and we are told that the public do not care much for really good films.

Q. Because it would not be a paying concern to the exhibitors?

A. Yes, and because a bad public taste had already been created.

Q. You recognise that the paying portion of the public in England is greater as compared with Burma? You cannot get Dukes and Duchesses, Count and Countesses to patronise the cinemas here as they do in England?

A. Yes.

Q. You are not one of those who believe that things are produced specially for consumption in the East?

A. No.

Q. We are an over-flow market, a tiny market and India and Burma offer a tiny field compared with the vast number of theatres in the West?

A. Yes.

Q. As compared with the 40,000 theatres, of much greater capacity and convenience, there are 300 or 350 theatres in India and Burma with small seating capacity. Your object is to improve the tone of the pictures?

A. Not only that. It is to create an interest in the effort to obtain a higher standard. We speak from an educational point of view. We want different types of pictures, possibly subsidised by Government.

Q. What is your suggestion? You want instructional films with a little amusement combined in them?

A. We would like educational films such as films on different steel industries, nature study films and so on. They might be shown once during the week in the programme.

Q. Supposing the attendance falls, would you guarantee them?

A. They might be subsidised in order to popularise the films. The low standard has been created by the lack of that type of film. That is why we wish to have a different kind of film to improve the standard.

Q. So your object is to produce a better standard of film? I suppose you are aware that the Burman films produced locally are not popular with the bulk of the audience, which goes to see the western films and does not go to see the Burman films?

A. It is probable.

Q. So to cater for the bulk of the audience, these films have to be produced in the west, if they are to be useful at all as a commercial proposition. Has your Council ever thought it would be more useful to address the producers themselves in this matter?

A. I think this is one of the things necessary.

Q. I take it your general opinion is that the Censorship Board should be a little more strict in dealing with such films as sex films? Do you advocate it even at the risk of the films losing popularity? Would you like to see, by some such action, western films cease to come to India, as it would not pay to send only first class films? There is also the possibility of cinema houses closing down. Would you tolerate it?

A. I think it is impossible to contemplate the closing of the cinemas.

Q. What I want to get at is the strength of your conviction, whether there is any serious objection to what we see in these days, and how the measures you suggest would affect the trade?

A. I think these questions have been raised and answered in our report.

Q. About strict censorship your Committee in its recommendations suggests children's shows, that is, there should be special performances for children?

A. We advocate it.

Q. Do you think the school will pay for such performances?

A. The children go to the performances and with some reasonable propaganda it ought to pay.

Q. Will your association take it up, the advertising and the popularising of such shows?

A. Yes.

Q. Supposing it is not a paying concern, would your association be prepared to help them in that direction?

A. We cannot speak for them.

Q. And you think it would be popular to have children's performances?

A. Yes.

Q. We were assured that it would help a great many of the westerners and easterners to know each other better?

A. It would.

Mr. Neogy: I am not very much aware of the constitution of the National Council of Women or the Vigilance Society either. Have you got printed reports, rules and so forth?

A. We have not got them with us at present.

Q. Could you please send them to us? A list of the members?

A. Yes. We have two annual reports. This is only the second year of the existence of the National Council of Women.

Q. The main object that you have is to raise the standard of the pictures now shown in India from the artistic point of view and also the educational?

A. Yes.

Q. And you are anxious to prevent misrepresentation of Western life in the East?

A. Yes.

Q. That is one of the points which have been raised in the questionnaire. In the reply given by the Secretary of your Association she says in the reply to the questionnaire "The majority of films of the Los Angeles type depicting scenes of extravagance and luxury must tend to misrepresent normal Western civilization and lower it in the eyes of Indians and Burmans." Do you agree with that statement?

A. Yes, we do.

Q. And then she goes on to say that "Films misrepresenting Western life must be misunderstood by uneducated Indians and Burmans." Do you subscribe to that view?

A. Yes, we do.

Q. And then your Honorary Secretary says "It is very natural that they should object to political subordination to a people whom they believe to resemble those depicted in such films." So, apart from the artistic side there is some amount of political prejudice also. Is it not so?

A. That may be Mrs. Bulkley's private opinion. It is our opinion.

Q. And do you assure us that this does not represent the views of the majority?

A. Certainly.

Q. But does that represent your views?

A. No. That does not represent our views.

Mr. Green: I take it that the chief concern of your council is with regard to children?

A. Yes.

Q. You want the present censorship to be retained; you only advocate a stricter censorship?

A. Yes, we advocate stricter censorship for films for children.

Q. So you would advocate the issue of A and B certificates, one suitable for adults and the other for children, I suppose?

A. Yes, that is the opinion of the Council.

Q. Do you think that an ordinary body of film censors would be capable of going into such details? Is it not a matter where difference of opinion is bound to arise?

A. We understood from the League of Nations Report that children's films and educational films are going to be listed by a competent body of public men and I suppose the censors here should be able to see such a list, and make use of it.

Q. Human nature being what it is don't you think the adolescents would deliberately go and see films which are not intended for them? Would there not be practical difficulty?

A. Yes, we agree there would be difficulty, but something might be done by legislation.

Q. You know the difficulties of legislation. Who is to decide whether a child is under 12 or 13 years of age?

Mrs. Fraser: There is the same difficulty in England too; there would not be any more difficulty in judging the ages here. Those who know Burman and Indian children should not find it difficult to judge the age of the child. With my school experience I may say I can judge the age of the average Eastern boy.

Q. But on whom will you place the responsibility?

A. On the Manager of the theatre.

Q. Don't you think that he should be permitted to prove his *bona fides* before you could convict him?

A. The theatre manager should be in a position to make the discrimination.

Q. Even when the parents desire to take the children with them?

A. We faced that difficulty in the Committee and we were able to solve it this way. If you have a children's programme once or twice a week, that will enable the whole family to go and visit the Cinema. If the parents take their children to the pictures on other days, the management ought to exclude them. That is our view.

Q. Don't you think in a matter of this kind it is hard to legislate and it is better to put the responsibility upon the parents themselves? And don't you think the parent is the best judge in these matters?

A. You are not legislating for the benefit of the intelligent or the educated classes, you should remember. If that were the case there would be no need for any legislation at all.

Q. You know that in America they legislated for total prohibition and we know the results have not been entirely satisfactory?

A. But we still believe that something should be done in that direction.

Q. You know there is a society called the Better Film Society in America? Their representatives have access to the Trade shows of films. Do you think it possible to get in touch with them so as to get a good supply of films intended for exhibition here?

A. We believe it should be possible. This society has agencies and correspondents all over the world and we think it would be possible to get into touch with them. In the same way we would be able to get into touch with the International Council of Women who are compiling lists of Children's films.

Q. Have you ever thought definitely on the question of Educational films? Do you think educational films of the kind shown in the West may be of any importance in this Country?

A. Yes, we believe so.

Colonel Crawford: I should like to know when this Sub-Committee was appointed by your National Council. I should like to know exactly whether your Sub-committee was appointed after the appointment of our Committee by the Government of India. My point is, I want to know whether your Sub-Committee was appointed to investigate the subject and place your views before our Committee?

A. Our Sub-Committee was appointed earlier, and we believe it was only after our Committee was formed that we read in the papers of the appointment by the Government of India of the Cinema Enquiry Committee.

Chairman: I suppose your Sub-Committee was appointed soon after the Vigilance Society sent in its memorial to your Council?

A. Yes.

Colonel Crawford: The objects of the Committee being, to safeguard the interests of children and to raise the general standard and tone of the pictures?

A. Yes, those are the objects.

Q. Regarding the second point, have you any practical suggestions to make as to how Government can take steps in that direction? Do you think the appointment of an aesthetic committee to classify the films would be practicable? Do you think such a committee could function properly?

A. We should think that the existing Board of Censors could be a little more discriminating in the matter and pay more attention to the artistic side of the pictures.

Q. Would you recommend that the Board of Censors should issue a certificate giving a short synopsis of the story and classify the films as is done in America, through Government agency or through the public press? Classifications may be made according to the fact whether the film is good for children or adolescents. Is it not so?

A. Yes. We should think that if the name of the present Board of Film Censors were changed they could be asked to do the work. We don't at present get a correct synopsis through the press at all. When a really good film comes to Burma the papers might be asked to publish a free criticism of the same for the information of the public; they would not publish an adverse criticism.

Q. Supposing there is a Central Board for all India and Burma governing the policy of censorship in this country, do you think the Secretary of that Committee could issue a paper giving a free criticism of all the films that have been censored and certified?

A. Yes.

Q. So, I take it, that is your practical suggestion for popularising good films?

A. Yes.

Q. Mr. Green raised the question of Children and the Cinemas. Might I say that you would like to have legislation compelling one cinema or some cinemas to give special performances to children once a week?

A. Some action should be taken in that direction.

Q. Some action in that direction to persuade the Cinemas to give special shows for children once a week at least, subsidised by Government, if necessary, to cover losses if any? Is that it?

A. Yes, and it will be found that parents as well as children will go to these shows.

Q. I would take you to some of your recommendations. You speak of reverent treatment of religious subjects. In England you come across criticisms on religious subjects. There is a film called the "The King of Kings." I shall read to you what a leading English journal has got to say about this picture:—"Go to a book-shelf that belonged to a Victorian child, take down from it a copy of the Bible richly, reverently, and mawkishly illustrated, and you will find in those illustrations a great part of the inspiration of Mr. de Mille's version of the life of Jesus; go to the Box office remembering that obvious irreverence must alienate support and gorgeous spectacle attract it, and you will discover another part of the film's directing motive. Unless it be irreverent to show Mary Magdalene (in colours) as a prosperous courtesan, so that her luxury may satisfy the supposed desire of film goers for scenes of luxury, or unless there be unwitting irreverence in the ridiculous upheavals that follow the crucifixion, the picture is reverence enough. Hollywood with elaborate self-consciousness, is on its best behaviour; the producer has taken elaborate pains that no great mass of people may be offended. And no one except certain men and women of taste who resent a sentimental Debasement of the Gospel narrative, will find offence in his work; these it will greatly offend. As a work of art, above all as a representation of the personality of Christ, the film is contemptible, a soft and flabby thing, without vigour and without spiritual fire, a piece of conventional "reverence" in the meanest tradition. Not once does the stiff figure that carries the name of Jesus suggest anything but a timid meekness that could have inspired no followers

and established no enduring faith. Here and there are minor scenes of merit. These things lie within the range of Mr. Cecil de Mille; an imaginative interpretation of the character of Jesus does not. The truth is that either the Gospels must be allowed to tell their own tale or, if the life of Christ is to be imaginatively told, it must be retold by an artist with infinite courage and with a point of view that is independent of popular criticism . . ."

A. We have both read that criticism.

Q. I should think religious films ought to be treated in a religious manner. One has to be very careful not to offend the religious susceptibilities of the other religious communities?

A. We admit that it is again a difficult matter to decide. We agree that religious susceptibilities ought to be considered.

Q. So you would leave the question of religious films in the hands of the public, I suppose?

A. Yes. "The Life of Buddha" was banned in Burma, after the public had raised a protest against that film.

Q. As regards the composition of the Censor Board I note you are for increasing the size of the Burma Board of Film censors. Are you in favour of this censorship being done by an ordinary set of ladies and gentlemen or do you prefer the same to be done by highly qualified and highly salaried men with the help of an Advisory Board?

A. Do you suggest that for Burma alone or for the whole of the East?

Q. I only put it to you as a proposition. Are you aware of the position in England? Censorship is done there as a part time occupation by highly qualified Retired gentlemen of high standing. They get about a thousand pounds a year as their remuneration?

A. As we have not studied the question we cannot give an opinion. We certainly would prefer to have qualified men on the Board.

Q. If you are going to have an Honorary Board you should have an increased number, is that your position?

A. Yes.

Q. My own opinion is that each film should be censored by two such stipendiary censors.

Chairman to Colonel Crawford: Will you explain to them what you mean by highly qualified men? Possibly they want to know the standard?

A. Yes, that is our point.

Colonel Crawford: I mean highly educated gentlemen with high general and University education. Do you really think that censoring should be done by better qualified people?

A. My personal opinion is that it is better to place the work in the hands of better qualified and highly cultured gentlemen than leave it in the hands of the ordinary people.

Chairman: Do you mean only the Western cultured people should do the work or would you include gentlemen with Indian culture also?

A. We have no objection to Indian cultured gentlemen also being included.

Q. Even though he has had no Western culture at all?

A. Yes.

Q. Say, he may be a Buddhist monk?

A. Buddhist monks have no worldly experience, and so are unqualified.

Colonel Crawford: Do you think that all the films should be re-censored here? For the Western films, at any rate, the censorship Board in India would be enough, I think?

A. Yes.

Q. I suppose the other pictures which are re-censored and banned here are so treated more on religious grounds than moral grounds?

A. Yes.

Q. I suppose you agree with me that the Advisory Board could also be consulted in the matter?

A. Is the Advisory body a competent body?

Colonel Crawford: It is an honorary body. I suppose that is the case with the Censorship Board in America? Would you like to see all this work done by the same board?

A. Yes.

Chairman: Do you think you can get any uniformity on the question of art even among the experts?

A. Yes, because there are questions of taste which are the same all the World over.

Q. Even in artistic matters?

A. Yes, on the things which really matter. I am very much in favour of encouraging locally produced films. I am also in favour of sending out State Scholars from Burma to foreign countries and Europe to study the technique of the art.

Chairman: Thank you very much for your interesting evidence.

A. We might add that we are very much in favour of British films being encouraged.

Written Statement of Dr. N. N. PARAKH, K.I.H., M.L.C., Rangoon, dated the 1st January 1928.

Being a member of the Burma Legislative Council, I have been asked by the Secretary to the Government of Burma, Education Department, to be favoured with my views on the questions of the Indian Cinematograph Committee, I beg to state that I have no connection with the Industry either in India, Burma or abroad, but having been connected with the Drama since I was 15 years of age till the 27th year, and having been an actor, manager, and proprietor of a theatrical company, playing in English, Gujarathi and Urdu plays throughout India, I can with some knowledge give my opinion as to the tastes, the habits and the knowledge of the cinema audience. Since 1884, I am in Rangoon practising as a Physician and Surgeon and I believe, I was the first person to see a cinema started in Rangoon about 1908, by a Mr. Vleland who used to get films from Mr. J. F. Madan, of Calcutta, and for whom I used to collect 40 per cent. of the nett income. Since the "Star" cinema which was the first in Rangoon, several cinemas have been in existence two of which the "Elphinstone" and the "Excelsior" were built under my supervision. I simply disbursed bills and sent account to my friend and once partner in the Dramatic line. Beyond giving the contractors and others money I had no personal share or concern in the affairs. Since my younger days I have had the opportunity of seeing for 10 or 15 years any and every dramatic, operatic, or other companies, with a free pass as my cousin the late Mr. C. S. Nazir of dramatic fame in Bombay, owned about half a dozen theatres there. I left the stage from Karachi in 1880, and since then I have no personal connection with the theatrical or the cinema line at all.

Educated Indians and Burmans do congregate largely to see Western films in Rangoon, not so the illiterate or the poorer classes who prefer to see the Indians or the Burman films. The majority of the audience in the 1st and 2nd classes are the Europeans, the Eurasians, the Parsis, and the educated Bengalis and Madrasses and Chinese, etc., the lower classes being a mixture of these though they are mostly literate and understand what is going on. I notice that hardly 5 per cent. of children under 14 years or 7 per cent. from the 14th to 20th year go to the cinemas. The Indians prefer to see the Indian dramas acted and the Burmese, their own natural scenes depicted, and for these there are separate cinema houses, which are fairly well patronized. The educated classes as a rule prefer Western films of sensational character. The puritans who prefer to strict censorship and who

wish to introduce purely educative and tame films will in my humble opinion strangle the industry. Although the educated and literate classes see jealousies, fights, thefts and films depicting hugging and kissing to some extent I am sure they have sense enough to understand that human nature demands adventures and sensation, and not tame pictures to see which they would prefer remaining at home. The impression left on their minds is of a temporary nature that hardly does any harm. It may be argued that the Indians see nothing but the brutal and immoral side of Western life—but this argument is not real. The Indian sees more of the foreigner's or the white people's life daily in India and Burma than he would in their own homes. For instance a European is invariably seen by the natives kissing, here, there and everywhere, their relatives, friends and children. How far Indians kiss theirs in public I have yet to see a Burman or an Indian kissing or hugging his wife, sister or mother in public. This custom of Western origin is so well known to the Indians and Burmans they give not even a passing thought that those who indulge in this are an immoral lot.

British soldiers prefer western films but not so the Indian soldiers who, unless they know English, prefer their own jat films. Films exhibited in this country are so far of a very satisfactory and high order. There is no monopoly or tendency to monopolize anything as anyone and everyone is free to trade, and open theatres or do any business. Acute business acumen, and over quarter of a century's vast experience of one firm (that of the Madan's) may have put them on a very strong footing but they are not enjoying any monopoly as the "trade jealousy" may be sometimes suggesting.

In India and Burma the main difficulties besetting the industry is in the poor quality of the equipments, actors and finance. I doubt the development of an Indian film producing industry on a large scale as yet. It will take 25 years more. If poor films are exported the film industry will come to an end.

There seems to me enough censorship at present and could hardly be in any case tightened. I do not think that crime has increased in Burma due to the Western cinema films. One or two motor car incidents if cited, had nothing to do with the cinema pictures. The evilly disposed people will resort to any new fangled scene they may see, but West is not East. They will soon be found out and traced here much more efficiently than in Western cities, where the criminals are so clever. In my opinion religious films depicting prophets and time-honoured rites, and ceremonies be left untouched—they bring religion to the level of the stage.

I don't think Indian producers can yet put in any substantial film of any competitive value—Time alone will tell. There's neither the capacity of the financial enterprise; existing Government must slowly assist the industry and not tax it, so that it may flourish. A centralized state agency as a monopoly will be most unfair competition and will defeat its own object. If the standard of films are to be improved the exhibitors alone know what pays them and no amount of co-operation with British Empire Industry will be of any paying concern unless all foreign films are prohibited.

The public that go to see Foreign or British films are quite capable of understanding the moral and the immoral aspects of the shows exhibited. What one person may object the other may not do so. The films so far seen by me has not had any glaring tendency to immorality or criminality. Films full of murders, nude dancers, etc., have been so far a negligible quantity. If such do come up the censors are responsible as a body and the censorship in Burma, I give credit to, is more than enough. I have never seen an indecent photo or poster displayed outside any theatre and I do not see any reason why still one more restriction be imposed on the exhibitors to have them censored. It will be simply interfering with the freedom of the trade and right of the public. The Government, Public bodies, and press should help the exhibitors and producers, by removing all unnecessary restrictions, and reducing taxations, custom duties, etc., to assist in maintaining a good standard of films.

The above answer although written in a hurry and not *seriatim*, will, I hope, be taken in the spirit in which it is given.

Oral Evidence of Dr. N. N. PARAKH, K.I.H., M.L.C., Rangoon, on Friday, the 20th January 1928.

Chairman: I notice in your statement you have used the words "indigenous industry". I suppose you include the Burman industry also in it?

A. Yes.

Q. What do you want the Government to do to give encouragement to this?

A. Firstly financial help.

Q. How? You mean by giving loans on cheap rates of interest?

A. Yes, by instituting some agency for giving such loans.

Q. What else do you want Government to do?

A. Government should assist them and should not tax them at present when they are finding it very difficult even to earn their own living. In these days of competition producers find it very difficult to find their living.

Q. You are now talking of producers?

A. Yes.

Q. You are not talking as an exhibitor?

A. No. The producer as such should be encouraged.

Q. How are they taxed?

A. I don't know.

Q. Your idea is that Government should help them in the way in which you have suggested?

A. Either in this way or in any other way.

Q. What other help do you want?

A. At present they are, I think, not capable of producing a very good film. They are in need of technical assistance also since they lack in technical knowledge about the film producing industry.

Q. What do you suggest for that? Do you think that Government should give scholarships to people here and send them abroad and enable them to learn the art or do you think that Government should send for experts and bring them here in order that Burmans might be taught the art here itself?

A. That is the look out of the people who want to learn the art. I have no opinion to offer on that.

Q. You think Government should give facilities for technical assistance?

A. Yes. They should be given assistance for the improvement of the indigenous industry.

Q. You say that films suggesting either crimes or sex-relations are very rare?

A. Yes, to my knowledge.

Q. You say you have been familiar with the industry for a very long time.

A. No.

Q. Are you a frequenter of the cinema?

A. Yes.

Q. In your opinion the number of films which are objected to either on grounds of crime or sex-suggestion is exaggerated?

A. Yes. To my knowledge such films are negligible in quantity.

Q. Do you apprehend that Western films shown in this country have any tendency to demoralise the adolescent class?

A. I don't think so.

Q. You think there is no danger at all?

A. No.

Q. You don't think there is anything wrong in those passionate love-making scenes?

A. It seems to me that the producers should not expose these hugging scenes too long and could tighten them a bit. The European customs and manners are too well-known to all people here, even the completely illiterate, and I think therefore that our people can understand what is going on. They well know that Europeans are in the habit of kissing their relations.

Q. The danger which is apprehended by the people does not lie in the ordinary everyday life of the Westerners being depicted on the screen?

A. I mean to say that the Europeans are in the habit of kissing each other, their wives and their children and their relatives in public—But I am yet to see a Burman kissing his wife or anybody in public. I don't think this habit is common with Indians also as it is with the white people.

Q. It is not always in this way you see it on the screen. It is not the kiss of a father or a brother but it is the kiss of a passionate lover.

A. In those cases it requires a little tightening. Sometimes they go too far. Though I do not think it has got any pernicious effect on the people here yet it should not be indulged to such an extent.

Q. Is there any difficulty felt by the people attending the cinema houses in the way in which they are being exhibited?

A. No. That is the only amusement they have got here and no difficulty at all is felt.

Q. Have you ever concerned yourself with the film industry here?

A. No.

***Oral Evidence of Mr. S. C. BHATTACHARJEE, Editor and Proprietor, "Rangoon Mail," on Friday, the 20th January 1928.**

Chairman: You are the Editor of the "Rangoon Mail"?

A. Yes, I am the Editor and Proprietor.

Q. I suppose you go to the cinema pretty often?

A. Yes, very frequently.

Q. Do you get a free ticket for the Press?

A. Yes, otherwise poor people like us cannot go very often.

Q. Do you like going to the cinema?

A. Yes. I enjoy it very much.

Q. Do you write any criticisms about the films?

A. Yes, very often.

Q. Praising or blaming?

A. It depends on the merits of the picture.

Q. On what grounds do you criticise?

A. On grounds of technical deficiency or misrepresentation or lowering of certain nations, etc.

Q. Have you made such criticisms?

A. Yes.

Q. Where? In your own paper?

A. In my own paper here and also in Bombay when I was on the staff of the "Bombay Chronicle", pointing out some objectionable features. Whenever they misrepresented certain aspects of Indian life I had occasion to criticise them.

Q. These you did in Bombay? What other criticisms have you made in Rangoon itself?

A. I have criticised certain pictures.

Q. What kind of pictures?

A. Indian and Western. My experience of pictures is generally confined to western and Indian films. I have seen few Burmese films. Before proceeding further I should like to have your permission to make some general observations.

Chairman: No. We know what it is we require from citizens like you. If there is anything particular we shall ask you about it afterwards.

A. I only want to make an appeal to the Committee, Sir.

Q. We do not want it. That may not be relevant to our purpose. We want only information from you regarding certain things. You are here only to assist us by giving such information as you can.

Q. Do you think the Indian film industry or the Burmese film industry is in need of Government aid?

A. I can say that the industry in Burma and India is in need of aid. Whether it should be indispensably State aid or Government aid I cannot say. I don't want to commit myself in this respect.

Q. What sort of aid is required?

A. Firstly financial aid and secondly technical aid also. So far as technical aid is concerned I should suggest that educated young men should be sent to America and Germany by the Government.

Q. Are you definite in that recommendation of yours? You are not afraid of Government in that respect?

A. Yes I am definite in that recommendation. I am not afraid.

Q. You are not for importing experts to teach here?

A. No. I am not for importing any experts. Our people must go and study the conditions there actually in those surroundings. They must specially be sent to America and Germany, where the trade can best be learnt.

Q. Wherever the industry has attained name and fame?

A. Yes. With regard to financial help, I think the production of films here can be encouraged if there are sufficient and proper Indian capitalists and if Indian capitalists take more and more interest in the matter.

Q. What do you want this committee to do in that direction? What are your recommendations?

A. In the first place I should think that this committee should give facilities to educated Indian students to go abroad to study the industry.

Q. What do you think this committee should recommend with regard to the financial side?

A. I have nothing to say.

Q. What do you think about the idea of a State Bank giving loans on cheap rates of interest?

A. If any loans or bounties can be given to the existing companies without in any way having any direct control over the production of films. I would not mind it. They can give loans if the companies are moderately sound.

Q. You mean to say that so far as they are satisfied about the management, the business aspect and not about the merit of the film?

A. Exactly so. I want to be very cautious in my remarks in this matter.

Q. You think Government aid might include Government supervision?

A. Yes, subject to the condition that they shall not introduce any sort of propaganda in their own favour.

Q. Subject to that safeguard you have no objection?

A. No. Through the banks the Government can help them.

Q. Why are you so much afraid that Government will take up control over production? Is it on account of any experience or simply on account of suspicion?

A. It is due to previous experience, I desire to repudiate the entire conception behind this whole enquiry.

Q. You think this Committee is motivated?

A. It is so, as far as public opinion is concerned. Its conception is encouragement to British films and also the so-called white prestige.

Q. Anyway it is a matter difficult even for Gods to divine; at any rate we can give you the assurance that we are glad not to be actuated by any such motives, because we do not really go into motives in this connection. I suppose you have not travelled in the West?

A. No.

Q. Are you quite satisfied that the students who are sent abroad will acquire those facilities for learning the technical side with ease? Don't you think that the western people will be jealous and will not give them the opportunities for learning things?

A. I have heard complaints that several Indians who went to England to learn technical matters connected with the film industry were positively discouraged; but that has not been the experience of young men who have gone to Germany or America.

Q. That again is the general belief? Who was your informant?

A. As a journalist I am expected to know something about these things. I can cite examples also. Men like Sessue Hayakawa have undergone such an experience. As a matter of fact, all countries have been represented in the American films.

Q. Of course we know all about that from the pictures and we do not want your personal experience. Anyway there is that distrust operating in your mind?

A. You should not call it distrust. If it is granted that America and Germany have progressed much in this matter, of the technical side in the production of films, then I do not see why our students should not be given the best help possible. The best British films can be compared only to the ordinary American production and how can our young men and students learn better technical things in England?

Q. One can understand it as a principle?

A. The only principle that I can understand is that instead of importing experts here, we should send our young men to other countries for training.

Q. But don't you think that they won't be allowed to learn the secrets of the trade to perfection?

A. I have no fear on that point.

Q. I suppose as a journalist you are satisfied with the moral tone of the films shown in this province?

A. Generally I am satisfied.

Q. You don't think there is any evil to be taken notice of by the Government, either positive evil or likely evil?

A. Generally, I should say, no.

Q. You think the present censorship is adequate?

A. Yes.

Q. I suppose you believe in censorship?

A. I do.

Q. You think that the censorship as now done is quite adequate to safeguard the public interests?

A. For the time being, it is quite adequate.

Q. Do you think that the objections raised by the Women's National Council of Burma are purely out of puritanical motives and are not true?

A. I do not think so; but so far as I can understand, their objections to certain films are based upon grounds which won't appeal to the public here. As a matter of fact their objections have been repudiated by the important newspapers here in Rangoon.

Q. Yes, I see both the "Rangoon Mail" and the "Rangoon Times" have taken it up?

A. The "Rangoon Gazette" also.

Q. You think the public do not share the views of the Women's Council?

A. No.

Q. That is how you read the public in the matter?

A. Yes, that is my idea.

Q. They are of course actuated by the best of motives I suppose?

A. Yes, I do not question their motives; but they are apt to be too puritanical in their views.

Q. Supposing their suggestions are carried out, after all what will be the harm?

A. On what particular point please?

Q. Say stricter censorship, avoiding close-up scenes, etc. What will be the harm done to the public by the cutting out of those portions by the censor, i.e., where there is too much embracing or kissing?

A. If the film represents any realistic side of life, I do not see why it should be objected to.

Q. Then what is the object of the public in seeing kissing and hugging? What benefit do they derive?

A. It may so happen that if such cuttings are made, they may mar the beauty of the film. I do not know how that will suit modern people. I would rather leave it to public opinion to shape itself.

Q. You mean the audience will take care of itself?

A. Yes. If free and compulsory universal primary education is introduced in the country, the people themselves will know how to distinguish between good and evil.

Q. Do you think primary education is the sole remedy for this?

A. Yes.

Q. By primary education, you mean up to the fourth or fifth standard?

A. I mean general knowledge of things which would be useful for the people.

Q. You mean they must be more broadly educated?

A. Yes.

Q. And you think the cinema is a means of educating them?

A. Yes. In my opinion the people should not only know the good things but also the bad things, so that they can protect themselves from the influence of the bad things. I do not believe in keeping the people away from evil; let them see the evil things and try to protect themselves.

Mr. Green: You believe in censorship?

A. Yes.

Q. Then you must draw the line somewhere?

A. I would certainly object to films which directly appeal to the people, i.e., those which are obscene, vulgar, or have too much of sexuality in them, etc.

Chairman: You don't see any such thing coming through now?

A. I do not think they generally come in.

Mr. Green: I am glad to hear that you do criticise films in your paper. Have you ever criticised the artistic merits of any particular film, i.e., the working of it, the plot, the characterisation, etc.?

A. Yes, I do that.

Q. You don't do that in the case of every film?

A. When personally I write something, some criticisms, I take particular care to depict the characters.

Q. It has been definitely stated to us by some gentlemen that if the criticisms are too candid, there would be no advertisements afterwards?

A. It is not necessarily so. It is not likely that any journalist would run that risk; but I am glad to say that so far that has not been my experience.

Chairman: You have criticised and you have been getting your advertisements all the same?

A. Yes.

Mr. Green: What about the publicity materials?

A. They don't send them at all; they only send the advertisements.

Chairman: Don't they puff by saying that these are super-things and all that?

A. I have seen such things; but we distinguish between picture and picture.

Mr. Green: I take it you know that a considerable number of Indian gentlemen have, on their own initiative, been to study the film industry both in America and Germany?

A. I know that some have gone to America.

Q. I take it it would be open to any film producing company here to send its own men for technical training to other countries?

A. Yes, if they can afford the necessary capital, I should think that it is to their business interest that they should send men to foreign countries for training.

Q. If people go on their own initiative, what particular reason have the Government to go to the expense of providing scholarships for such people?

A. If Government think that this industry has a future in India, that it should be developed on proper lines, they can create scholarships for the purpose.

Q. But would you yourself, as a public man and a journalist, support a proposal that Government should create scholarships for boys to go to learn cinematograph work in other countries? Are you satisfied that this subject is sufficiently important and that there are not other subjects of even greater importance on which Government money should be spent?

A. I personally do not think it will be proper for the Government to take the initiative in the matter at the present stage; because in my opinion the industry has not sufficiently developed as yet. But if some producers or, say, an association of producers approach the Government for the necessary financial help in order to get more technical experts, I think Government should favourably consider such an application. I am not for sending young men from India to Europe or America just for the purpose of learning better acting for the cinema. They should be sent for getting technical efficiency.

Colonel Crawford: I understood you to say that you criticise films when those films are misrepresentations?

A. Yes.

Q. Would you criticise any film which misrepresented the Prophet Mahomed?

A. I would, if it is misrepresentation I would criticise even European films.

Q. What are your objections to the introduction of foreign experts here? I do not read "British" into the word "foreign". I take it that it is your opinion that America and Germany can provide the experts. What is your objection to bringing foreign experts here and what is the reason for your preferring to send the students there?

A. In my opinion, if our young men are sent there, they will learn the technical side in a shorter time, and I think they will get the necessary atmosphere also.

Q. Supposing I send you to Germany, what is the first thing you would have to do?

A. Of course I am not in the cinema industry myself. I will have to learn German before I can think of learning the film industry. But my point is

this: that in this matter, the language is not the only important thing. We care more for technical efficiency.

Q. If you did know the language, it would be more advantageous; but there must be some difficulty?

A. I will cite the example of some of my friends who learnt the German language in about six months. As a matter of fact they went from the rural areas, and I know that they learnt German in six months, and they have also gone in for scientific knowledge.

Q. Supposing you send your students to England; you can do that in the hope that they will have enough opportunities there to learn the work; but how can we in India ensure that our students in America will get such opportunities?

A. That is for the Government, Sir, to arrange; they must make the necessary arrangements.

Q. You mean with America?

A. Yes, with the American Government.

Q. That will be a difficult matter?

A. Especially in America I do not think there will be any difficulty.

Q. Anyhow that is one difficulty, is it not?

A. Yes.

Q. Next, supposing the Government felt that there was a necessity for the production of propaganda films, not political propaganda (I mean propaganda on public health, agriculture and so on), and after having consulted the private agencies first as to whether they could produce the films required by the Government, came to the conclusion that it would be better to have these films made through a first-class studio of their own, they imported foreign cameramen, a foreign director and a foreign technician to run their studio—that studio to be an up-to-date studio and to be available to producers as a training ground, not for one or two students but for 20 or 30 students per annum—do you think you can support such a proposal?

A. If along with that there is a stipulation that within a fixed period, the whole thing should be entirely Indianised, I will have no objection.

Q. You mean experts should be got short term contracts?

A. Yes. Personally, I hold that our students should be sent to America and Germany or any other foreign country where they can have technical education. If however such an arrangement can be made in India itself, that is, if a well-equipped studio can be started in which our young men can be given first-class technical education, I will certainly have no objection.

Q. That is, they will have a solid portion of their training in the Government studio and then go for the wider experience of western studios?

A. True; but I would not have foreign experts managing that studio for any length of time. I must put a time-limit; and those experts must guarantee to produce Indian experts from that studio within a certain specified time.

Chairman: They must do it honestly, is that your idea?

A. Yes. They should not linger. A period of five years or six years may be fixed for this purpose.

Q. Have you thought of the high cost of students going to the west? They will have to get their necessities there and accustom themselves to living there, that is, in other words they will have to live under difficult conditions. Do you still hold that that is the correct method, in preference to the other suggestion?

A. So far as cost is concerned, I do not think the cost of establishing a studio here will be less.

Q. But the studio to be established will be only for the purpose of producing the propaganda films, that is, films on agriculture, public health, etc.? It is not going to be one for training, which will only be incidental.

A. I have very grave doubts whether such films can be produced here on a commercial basis.

Q. If the Government were to ask for tenders from private agencies—and that is the method which I would adopt as the correct method—the question is whether private agencies can provide them at a reasonable price?

A. There again we come to the point as to how far the State should interfere in matters which should be purely left to private concerns.

Q. I am at one with you there in principle. But for private contracts, I will have certain provisos, that they should not cost the taxpayer an undue amount, that the work should be done by private agencies and so on. It is just possible that in this particular industry private agencies have their full time occupied with the production of entertainment films and therefore they might not contract for Government work, for these propaganda films, except at a rate which they would get for entertainment films. That is perfectly reasonable. But we might find after examination that Government could produce their own films at a very much smaller cost. Would you still hold to the principle that the private agencies should be preferred to the Government studio?

A. My only fear is that the cost of the Government studio in Rangoon will be normally higher than that of the private agency. It is all a question of experience; I have no experience in the line, and so I cannot give an opinion on that.

**Written Statement of Mr. K. N. SUBBIAH NAIDU, Editor,
“Desopokari,” Rangoon, dated the 20th January 1928.**

1. I am not connected with the cinema industry.

2. 95 per cent. of the people in the cinema centres in Burma attend cinema theatres. This percentage of attendance is applicable to all the cinema centres such as Rangoon, Mandalay, Moulmein and other places. Men, women and children (except purdah ladies), Hindus, Muslims and Christians, Burmans, Indians and Europeans attend the theatre. Among the visitors 30 per cent. of the people are under the age of 14.

3. Burmans like to see the plays in which Burma's historical stories, stories of their heroes and kings are pictured. Hindus are fond of attending shows where they can see the stories of Mahabharatha, Ramayana, stories of Puranas, stories of the heroic sons of India and the heroic daughters of chastity, the stories that will kindle the sense of patriotism and social service well pictured. Muslims wish to see their religious stories and patriotic stories in the films.

4. Generally the pictures are not shown as to the want of both the Indian and Burmese public.

Contrarily some Western lust inspiring love films, the films that create in the mind of the youngsters secret plots to rob and steal are shown. These Western films produced by the Westerners are doing great havoc in poisoning the minds of the young people.

5. The films produced by the Indians are really appreciated by the educated people both Indians and Burmans. The films of Kohinoor Co., Imperial Film Co. of Bombay are much appreciated. The films of “Krishna Leela”, “Mahabharatham”, “Ramayanam”, “Indian National Congress” are very much liked.

6. The people like the plays selected from Indian Epics, Burmese Mythology and English History. Both the educated and uneducated desire much to see the films that rightly educate them religiously, politically, morally and socially.

7. The films shown to both the Indian and English soldiers must impress in their minds the real service to humanity by their sacrifice and heroism with character. They must teach them to show mercy towards women and children, the poor and the vanquished.

8. (a) The present production of films is not satisfactory. The effort must be made to produce films enormously in India.

(b) The reasons that the film Industry is not much in progress are:—

1. The Government have not come forward to help the industry.
2. The competition of foreign films.

The Government must take proper measure to encourage the people connected with the industry and to help them financially. The Government also protect the Indian Film Industry by levying sufficient taxes to the foreign films and thereby checking competition.

9. The owners of the theatres cannot get the films for moderate price. Some Indian films liked by the people are censored by the Board and consequently the poor enterprisers in the industry are afraid to come forward. For example in Madura (Madras Presidency) the film of “Mahabharatha” was not allowed to be shown.

10. I am not prepared to answer anything with regard to this question.

11. The films are shown only after the examination by the people appointed for that purpose. But the duty discharged by them is not so fair as to be appreciated. They care only to observe whether there is any political motive in the film, and they do not take much interest with regard to the morality and reform which the film impresses upon the minds of the public. They don't take much notice of the films that rouse the lust impulse and brute impulse and they are easily passed by them. Therefore the people who examine the films must be patriotic and native leaders of the country.

12. If the tax is imposed, the industry will not progress much. There are not many Indians and Burmans who take active part in cinematograph enterprise. The result of levying tax will be the attendance of the people in small number.

13. Tax imposed upon the importing films must be raised. It won't do any harm to the Indian Cinematograph Companies in any way. But, raising the tax upon the importing films, Government must not keep quiet without promoting the Indian film industry. In that case the competitors will be much benefited. The importing machineries and instruments which are not obtainable in India for the Indian film industry must not be heavily taxed.

14. The films for the spreading of improved agricultural method are not necessary. Agricultural method and condition of the Burmese and Indian people are fairly well. The films that will promote the condition of Health and Sanitation are necessary.

15. There is much scope for the improvement of the film industry in this country. We have many theatres and enterprisers and best social story writers.

16. Therefore it is most necessary to take steps to promote and protect the film industry in India.

17. There will be sufficient finance for the film industrial enterprise provided the Government guarantees protection of the industry.

18. Please see 12, 13, 14, 15 and 16.

19. I have not been supplied with sufficient information to answer this question.

20. If the Government are not willing to finance, they must at least guarantee the protection of it from the competition of the foreign films. They must not also contemplate levying further taxes. All the taxes levied upon the people at the present time by the Government are more than sufficient and the people are very much burdened with the taxes.

21. The Government must appoint a Committee for censorship and they must see that the best films that will improve the condition of the society in morality, health and sanitation are produced. Three-fourths of the members of the Committee must be the members of the Legislative Council and Assembly, who are elected by the people.

22. India must not follow the Imperialistic dictates. In that case the progress of the Indian film industry will surely be retarded. It must be left to the determination of the Committee appointed as to the exchange of films from India to other countries under the British Empire and from there to this country.

23. Please see (22).

24. I think the present day films shown in the theatres corrupt the mentality of the people. The films that create criminal mind among the public are shown. The films that contain the action of the persons like Eddie Polo, William Dusman, Charles Hetcheson, Douglas Fairbanks, etc., induce the weak-minded people to commit dacoity in the train and by motor. The young people are induced to become corrupted and to commit rape, adultery and elopement. They are encouraged to commit forgery and to play fools in the Bank and among the business world. The young women are liable to lose their constancy. Proper care is not taken in censoring these ugly and mischief-making films. There are some Western films in which women characters appear half naked. This does a great havoc in the minds of our young people. The main reason for the prevalence of crimes in this province is due to the cinema shows. With regard to this I have gathered sufficient information. I happened to meet many criminals in the jail and I was forced to come to the conclusion that many of them have been initiated into the crimes by these cinema shows.

25. There is vast difference between the social status of the Western public and the public of India and Burma. The ordinary Western woman's general customs and habits are supposed to be detrimental to the morality of the Indian and Burmese society. The close movement of both the sexes in the West is considered to be mean and immoral in the East. The lust inspiring films of the West spoil both the young men and young women of this country. The films imported here must be properly examined by the Committee in India.

26. The religious films must be carefully examined. The films creating ill-feeling in the minds of the people must be censored. The films must not in any way wound the religious feeling of the people.

27. Almost all the Western films spoil the moral sense of the Indians and Burmans. The films that degrade the Indian civilization and culture must be censored.

28. Please see above.

29. The films that must not be shown to the children and the old must not also be shown to the young. Love films and the half nude pictures spoil the moral strength of the people.

30. Please see 29.

31. The Censor Committee must contain three-fourths of the members elected by the public.

32. In this province the censorship is not properly done. It is done mainly by the people in the police department. If there must be strict and right censorship the members must be of most educative value and they must be elected by the educated public or they must be elected members of the Legislative Council and Assembly.

33. Of course it is the opinion of the wise to censor the films that is detrimental to the welfare of the society even if the general public complain against such action. By doing so the progress of industry and art will not in any way be retarded.

34. Every province must have a Board of Censorship.

35. The members of the provincial Board must be elected by the public. One of the members may be appointed as a paid servant to carry out the work.

36. It seems the Inspectors are not discharging their duties properly. It is the rumour that they are bribed. Men interested in the service of human-

ity, promotion of the social welfare of the public must be appointed for the purpose.

37. The provincial Board can exercise power in censoring a film which is shown in other provinces.

38. I do not know if there is any such film that can be shown in one province and not in the other.

39. A film entitled "Five Nights" was allowed by the Board in Bengal and censored in Burma.

40. I have seen the advertisement films in the theatres and there is no necessity to censor anything. Nothing to be censored is shown.

41. There is no proper and definite status of the pictures in Burma.

42. I have nothing to say with regard to the co-operation of the Censor Board and the producers.

43. There must be definite method of taxing the importing and exporting films. In order to protect the Indian film industry the foreign importing films must be properly taxed.

44. Press and the public will help for the necessary production of the films.

45. The Board must have power to exercise their discretion as to the production of films. If they know the defects of a film to be produced they can stop it before the production. The place in which the films are produced must be registered. The places must be visited and examined by the Board.

***Oral Evidence of Mr. K. N. S. NAYUDU, Editor of "Desopakari,"
Rangoon, on Friday, the 20th January 1928.**

(The questions were put by the Chairman in Tamil, and the answers given were also translated by him.)

A. I have been here for 20 years. I belong to the Ramnad district. I have been connected with "Desopakari" for the last three years; before that, I was doing trade. I have been to the cinema during the last three years more frequently; before that too, I used to go. I truly feel, as I have stated in my answer to questions No. 24 and No. 27, that the Indians and Burmans are spoiled by seeing the western films. Although the motor car perhaps came here along with the cinema, still I do hold that motor car dacoities are due to what the people see on the film. The main cause is that although the existence of the motor car gives facilities, the dacoities are due to what they see on the film. Also, the way in which the two sexes are shown to behave towards each other on the screen is productive of evil. Although the man may not know English, still if he is an educated man in his own language, he would not be affected by seeing these things on the screen; but it is the illiterate people who are likely to be affected. My belief is that the illiterates frequent these shows in larger numbers. By seeing these things, the idea gets into their mind that one man can steal another man's wife. Although it is not a new idea, still that gets a field for extension. I am a Congressman; my remedy for these things is this: less of this sort of films and more educational films, using "education" in a broad sense, should be encouraged. I object to dancing, I object to a man and a woman embracing, and therefore such pictures ought not to be shown here in India or in Burma.

I do not mind their touching each other, but I object to their dancing. Such things should not be shown here. Dancing halls may exist, but we do not go there, and therefore I do not mind what happens there. This cinema we go to and therefore I object to it. The proper remedy for this is for the Government to produce films in this country or encourage the production of films in this country of a suitable type. We Congress people would have no objection to spending money on this affair; on the other hand we would wel-

come it. Also in the matter of import duties and finance, Government should come to our help. I do not mean to say that we should exclude western pictures altogether, but only good films should be shown. The present censorship is not adequate. More stress should be laid on moral grounds rather than on political grounds which now actuate the censorship boards.

I have in mind what they did in Madura when they showed a film from the Mahabharata which was stopped. It was objected to on the ground that it produced enmity against the English.

Because on account of the powder and other stuff the actors used they appeared like English people and this is the ground taken and they thought Dhuryodhana's party was depicted as western people.

So more tax should be imposed on western films in order to encourage the Indian film industry. You must create a taste in this country for Indian films by encouraging it in every way.

As regards the evils of the cinema, I went to Jail for political reasons for nearly a year and a half. I talked with the other convicts who were convicted for robbery, dacoity and so on and they told me that they resorted to it on account of what they saw on the screen. The present way in which the youth of the country behaves must be due to that in a very large measure.

I did not become a political on account of my learning of western history but more on account of my own history.

Colonel Crawford: On the question of inspectors he says it is rumoured that they are bribed. Can he give any evidence of that. Would he remove it from the statement?

Chairman: He says he believes it to be so. He has heard of that rumour in Madras. If there are no inspectors, there are others to do his work.

***Oral Evidence of Mr. M. M. AZUM, M.L.C., Bar-at-Law, Sole Proprietor, "Rangoon Daily News," Rangoon, on Friday, the 20th January 1928.**

Chairman: I suppose you are a native of Burma.

A. I am a native of the Punjab.

Q. You have settled here?

A. 33 years I have been here and I am myself 47.

Q. Do you go to the cinema pretty often?

A. No.

Q. You are in contact with the people who go to the cinema. Could you give us a general impression of the effect of the cinema on the people? It is said that a certain class of criminals have learnt something from the cinema.

A. I think the matter should be left to the police people. I leave it to the police to express an opinion on that point.

Q. You would trust to their judgment?

A. Yes.

Q. As regards sex films, you have heard the objection of the last witness. There are similar people all over India and here too there is the vigilance society and the National Council of Women. What is your opinion about it?

A. I do not pay much attention to that sort of complaint.

Q. In respect of censorship, is there anything to be said against it?

A. I think they are unduly excited and frightened.

Q. Supposing they act up to the advice of such people, do you think any harm will be done to the trade?

A. I think it might injure the trade. I do not know why, when the same thing is done on the stage, it should be objected to on the screen.

Q. But do you see the same passionate kissing on the stage?

A. No.

Q. I suggest of course there is this thing to be remembered in respect to the stage. Here action is accompanied by words whereas on the screen they will have to express everything by action.

A. That is so.

Q. You are generally satisfied then with the work of the present censorship board.

A. I am quite satisfied.

Q. Do you go to the Burmese films?

A. I have not been to Burmese or Indian films.

Q. Have you seen the Chinese films?

A. Once I saw one. I could not understand the language and so I left the place.

Q. Even to you the language plays an important part. You mean the picture was not sufficiently explanatory without the captions?

A. That is so.

Q. Are you satisfied with the present Board of Censors here in Burma?

A. I think some additions should be made to their number. This was felt when the films "Shah Jehan" and "The Life of Buddha" were censored. In such cases if there were a Muhammadan and an Indian the decision would be different. I think there should be a Muhammadan if there is a Muhammadan film and a Hindu in the case of a Hindu film.

Q. Each community should judge what is best for that community?

A. Yes.

Q. So you think that the Englishman is not the best judge of what is good for India?

A. No.

Q. In that view you would advocate that every film to be accepted must be seen by more than three members?

A. Yes.

Q. Those dealing with real life; you think that if such films are examined by such a body that will be better and many of the objections might disappear?

A. I think so.

Answers to Questionnaire by F. H. SIDHWA, Managing Director, Globe Theatres, Ltd., of India, Burma and Ceylon, Rangoon.

INTRODUCTORY.

1. I have been connected with the Cinema Industry in Burma and India for the last 15 years. As theatre-owner, exhibitor, importer and distributor of films I have an intimate knowledge of the industry in most of its different branches. Besides I am President of the Burma Cinema Trade Association Limited.

The Globe Theatres Limited of which I am one of the two Managing Directors had its inception in a Company called The Globe Cinema Company, which had been started in 1915 in Rangoon with a very small capital and which possessed a Cinema House called The Globe in Rangoon. There were at that time 3 more shows in existence namely Cinema-de-Paris, Elphinstone and Edison Bioscope. All these 3 were more or less Serial Houses. It was the Globe that introduced and created a taste for Feature programs and Variety Turns and has all along adhered to the policy of presenting selected high class entertainments. In a few year's time I succeeded in establishing branch shows in Mandalay, Moulmein and Myingyan, and in building up a small circuit in Burma where our films were shown. After the boom in business

in 1918 to 1920 a slump set in and in consequence several of the leading firms in India who were importing films and from whom we were getting most of the requirements for our own Theatres and the circuit were either closed or failed. At this time we began to feel that there was a distinct tendency towards monopolising the film-supply in India by a certain firm in Calcutta and we felt that unless we were in a position to import the major part of our requirements of films we may soon cease to exist. Calcutta, Bombay and Rangoon being the leading show places or "Key-Cities" in India we had necessarily to extend our activities to, and develop our business in, India. In 1922 we succeeded in securing the lease of the Bijou Grand Opera House in Calcutta. In order to get a footing in Calcutta and thereby in the vast country of India, owing to the keen competition created by the monopolists we had to pay a heavy premium to secure the said lease. The extent of the monopoly in Calcutta can be easily gathered from the fact that out of the 14 Cinemas now running only 2 including one of ours are independent, the rest—12 belong to Messrs. Madan Theatres Limited. Having been well established in Calcutta, besides owning our own Cinema at Bangalore and now one in Bombay we have been able to build up a fairly large film circuit and have been importing for the last 6 years most of the films shown at our Theatres and we supply the same to about 35 Cinemas all over India, Burma and Ceylon.

GENERAL.

2. (a) To have a proper idea of the proportion of the educated and illiterate classes visiting Cinemas we have first to analyze the Cinema Houses. There are 4 distinct classes in Burma:—

- (1) Feature Houses where exclusively Western (Imported) films, each complete by itself as opposed to serial films, are shown and which are patronised generally by European, Anglo-Indians and other educated classes. Such Houses exist only in Rangoon.
- (2) Serial Houses, where long serials or Chapter plays and second rate features of Western origin, full of action and pep are shown and which are patronised generally by the younger men, semi-literate and illiterate classes. Serials were in great vogue and popularity some years ago but since the advent of the indigenous films—the popularity and number of such Houses have both diminished to a great extent.
- (3) Houses where are shown almost exclusively indigenous films—either Burmese, Indian or Chinese. These Houses are patronised both by literate and illiterate classes Burmese, Indians and Chinese respectively. The illiterate classes who would not have otherwise cultivated the cinema habit are now becoming almost regular patrons in increasing numbers. The Burmans patronise Burmese films, and Indians Indian and the Chinese Chinese.
- (4) Houses in small towns exhibit all classes of films—Western features, serials and indigenous films. Here the audience is cosmopolitan and is drawn from educated as well as illiterate classes in the proportion of three to one.

(b) The composition of an average Cinema audience in a Feature House like "The Globe" is about 85 per cent. Europeans, Anglo-Indians and other educated classes—Burmans, Indians and Foreigners and 5 per cent. semi-educated classes. People of illiterate class hardly patronise such shows.

In our Moulmein and Yenangyaung Theatres the composition of an average Cinema audience is almost the same as above. In Mandalay and Myingyan the percentages vary somewhat. There are about 60 per cent. of the educated class 35 per cent. semi-educated and 5 per cent. illiterates.

(c) The proportion of children under 14 or adolescents of impressionable age would hardly be 5 per cent. but the proportion of children increase when farcical comedy films featuring well known comedians like Harold Lloyd,

Charlie Chaplin, Max Linder, Betty Balfour or films featuring juvenile stars like Baby Peggy, Jackie Coogan or Wesley Barry or animal stars are shown.

N.B.—In the sense in which the word "illiterate" is used for census purposes it would be interesting to know that there is no illiteracy amongst the Burmese male population, all males are taught to read and write at least their own name. Amongst the Burmese female population literacy is much more wide spread than amongst women in India. Burmese women generally enjoy more social freedom than it is said, even European women do. They therefore move more freely and patronise Cinemas more particularly those showing Burmese films. Burmese womanfolk used to visit Feature and Serial Houses in quite a satisfactory number but now they are very rarely seen attending such Houses. Their feeling of national patriotism and perhaps the fact that they can easily understand and follow Burmese films led them almost wholly to abandon Western pictures.

Amongst "educated" classes include people who know not only English language but the vernacular language.

My experience has been that the coolie class domestic servants and such other classes are very rare patrons of Feature Houses.

At all Cinema Houses the greatest patrons are the middle and lower-middle classes. The taste of these classes has gradually so far improved that a second class film has no chance of success. They have acquired a keen appreciation of good acting, good staging and fine photography. As a matter of fact they have proved the best critics of cinema entertainments. They have become so well trained and take such a keen interest in following feature films that they intelligently anticipate the sequences of the story at different stages as the story is unfolded on the screen but if the sequence is flat they would not fail to criticise.

PART I.

Film Industry in India.

3. Films with a lot of action and simple in story such as Cowboy and Outdoor pictures, Comedies featuring comedians like Harold Lloyd, Charlie Chaplin, Max Linder, Betty Balfour, Films portraying real human theme like "Les Miserables," "Miracle Man," "Enemies of Women," "Beau Geste," "Flag Lieutenant" appeal to all classes of Indian people educated and uneducated young and old and of both sexes. Indigenous films portraying gods and goddesses, miracles, mythology are immensely popular with the lower classes because they appeal to their religious sense as no other class of films does.

4. The exhibitors do endeavour to cater adequately for their public. The Cinema business has become very competitive and if an exhibitor neglects to cater adequately he is sure to go to the wall. It is to his interest to exhibit what his audience likes. If he fails his competitor reaps the benefit. At times when an exhibitor is not able to cater adequately it is mainly due to difficulties in getting a good class of films either imported or locally produced. This difficulty is due to a certain extent to the monopoly now existing. It is therefore highly desirable that there should be a healthy competition in the key cities and other important stations. In the absence of competition the tendency for the exhibitor is to show any trash and the cinema-going public has to put up with it.

5. Indian—produced films, depicting Indian life are not quite readily available to exhibitors but the difficulty in securing them now is not so great as it was some years ago, as such productions are increasing almost in the same proportion as the demand, and the supply and demand will adjust itself shortly if both branches of the trade, viz., production and exhibition are left unhampered by the interference from any individual or public authorities or Government. My objection to interference by the authorities is with respect to the source of capital and to the subject matter of the films, which should not be subjected to Government censoring before actual production.

(a), (b) It is evident from the increasing number of patrons for Houses showing indigenous films that they are not of bad quality. However there is much room for improvement.

(c) It is more profitable now-a-days for the 2nd, 3rd and 4th class of Houses referred to in my answer to the question No. 2, to show an indigenous rather than a Western film. Amongst the most successful of recent Burmese films are "Mya-Tha-Bet." Amongst the most successful of Indian films are "Krishna-Janam," "Goolbakavli" and "Sacrifice." These films however successful in Indian Houses will fall flat in 1st Class or Feature Houses even if dressed up in English garb as the visitors of such Houses are accustomed to pictures of high entertaining standard perfect in technique, acting and more appealing to their cultured taste.

I may add here that Burmese, Indian, and Chinese films are shown in our district shows and my experience has been derived mostly from their exhibition in the districts.

6. (a), (b) The films of Indian life depicting stories from the national literature, history and mythology are naturally more popular with the general Indian audiences both of the upper and lower middle class but they do not keep their hold on educated Indians unless their entertaining qualities are as good as those of Western films. Topical films of big happenings and interesting events in India are likely to be popular with all classes and audiences. No serious attempt has yet been made by anyone to issue a regular topical film on the principal of the "Pathe Gazette" or "Topical News" of London. My firm in Calcutta as well as here produce and present such topicals of importance local events and they are appreciated by our audiences. In Topical films time is the main factor, the earlier they are shown the more the appreciation. We are able to exhibit our films commencing from the night of the event.

7. My firm caters for the troops by supplying films for exhibition at regimental cinemas in several parts of India. Excepting sex and problem plays all the films that generally appeal to the civilian classes appeal to them. Virile, outdoor, dramas with plenty of action, sporting dramas and British films are popular with the troops. We do not experience any difficulty whatsoever in supplying regimental Cinemas with such films as both British and Indian troops like to see.

8. (a) The production branch of the industry is still in its infancy. So far however, it has made a satisfactory progress in Bombay Presidency and Burma but much yet remains to be accomplished. As long as there are independent exhibitors in the Key Cities and other towns there will not be any difficulty in distribution.

(b) The main difficulties besetting the Industry are however many. In the production branch the main difficulties are:—

- (1) Lack of technical knowledge, paucity of producers, scenario-writers and good actors and actresses. (2) Shyness of capital owing to want of confidence in the industry by the investing public for which there are several good reasons. (3) Total absence of state-aid and banking facilities even on a small scale (4) lack of facilities by authorities to use historical buildings, railways, troops, forts and gunnery, etc. (5) Entertainment tax where it exists.

9. Really good films are not easily obtainable by independent exhibitors in India and the main reason is that there exists a monopoly of both supply and exhibition of films. The monopoly is becoming more manifest day by day. To understand how this monopoly works and to prove the fallacy of the statement that there are more than 250 cinemas outside the circuit of the monopolists, one must bear in mind that in the cinema industry the Key City Theatres play the most important part. In India the real Key Cities are 3 namely Calcutta, Rangoon and Bombay. Unless an imported Western film is shown in these 3 cities it has no chance of earning its purchase price, even if it be exhibited at all the rest of the towns where such films are in demand. Examining the recent position in the Key Cities we find that in Calcutta

out of 14 cinemas 12 belong to Messrs. Madan Theatres Limited and 1, viz., Globe Opera House belongs to us. In Bombay there were till lately 6 first class Feature Houses of these 3 belonged to Messrs. Madans, but within the last few months they have acquired control of 2 more 1st class Feature Houses, and 3 other Houses. It is rumoured that the Royal Opera House which is the only Feature House independent of them has been bought over by them. There are in Bombay about 6 other cinemas but they all exhibit either Indian films or serials and 2nd run films. My firm is opening out a cinema at the Old Gaiety Building under the name of "The Capital." Messrs. Madans will still control about 85 per cent. of Feature Houses.

In Rangoon up to 4 months ago they had 4 Cinemas of which 2 were First Class Feature Houses or Key Theatres, 1 Burmese House and 1 Indian House but now they have 6. Besides these they have now taken a lease of our Globe building by paying Rs. 3,750 monthly plus all Municipal Taxes in place of Rs. 1,000 plus taxes we now pay. We being their only competitor in Burma and India they have paid almost 4 times our present rent, which is unheard of in any line of business with the sole object of pushing us out of the business. Having regard to the fact that our business was first started in Rangoon and from the profits made in Burma we have been able to open out in Calcutta and Bombay and make a footing in India against their crushing competition they have paid an exorbitant rent even at the risk of working at a loss to deprive us of our only Cinema House in Rangoon. Not satisfied with this, they seem to be determined to crush us and other independent exhibitors. Wherever they find we have some chance of acquiring a Cinema they pay abnormally big rents and deposits of large amounts. To give one instance, the Queen's Cinema which is a Burmese House belonged to one of the Rangoon exhibitors Mr. E. Fernandez. It cost him to build and furnish about Rs. 50,000. The land was a fifteen years' lease hold on a monthly rental of Rs. 300. The landlord acquired the show from Mr. Fernandez at Rs. 35,000 and a monthly rent of Rs. 1,600 to 1,800 plus all Municipal taxes. The rental value of the whole show including the land was less than Rs. 700 per month to Mr. Fernandez whereas it will cost Madans almost 24 times that amount. Further they bought over in September 1927 the lease for the unexpired period of 6 years of the Majestic or Wembley Cinema at a cash price of Rs. 1,05,000. Under the said lease they are paying ground rent extra which is Rs. 600 per mensem and Rs. 700 per month from 1st October 1927 plus all Municipal taxes amounting to about Rs. 700 per month.

There now remain only 3 cinemas outside their control one of which is wholly devoted to showing of Chinese films and Chinese Theatricals, another exhibits exclusively Indian films and the third exhibits either Burmese films or serials. Even these they would not let alone. They are reported to have offered big rentals and large deposits to the owners of the building over the heads of the present lessees.

Another instance of how they attempt to control all the Cinemas of Rangoon and drive away all competitors. On the building of Dagon Cinema on Sule Pagoda Road which is one of their Burmese Houses they hold a lease. This building has been occupied by our Globe Cinema in the beginning in 1915 and 1916 and is situated right opposite our present Globe. Their present lease expires in a year or so. They now pay a monthly rental of Rs. 1,150 and they have already volunteered to give to the landlord Rs. 3,000 a month for renewal of the lease for a further period.

There is a new cinema building being put up in Montgomery street which will be completed shortly. It is erected on lease-hold-land secured at a high rental of Rs. 1,000 per mensem 4 months ago when Madans' attempt to obtain all possible cinema houses for themselves had created an artificial boom in rents in the Cinema quarter of Rangoon. The Building and necessary furnishing may cost about Rs. 55,000 Madans are reported to have offered to pay for its lease a large amount of cash deposit and a monthly rental of Rs. 2,500 plus taxes.

All the Cinemas in Rangoon with the exception of the one showing Chinese films are situated on main streets, viz., Sule Pagoda Road, Montgomery Street

and Phayre Street in the heart of the town and within a radius of 500 yards, out of 4 Feature Houses they now hold 3 and after expiry of our lease on 31st March this year they will have no competitor at all. For exhibition of Burmese films they practically have the whole field to themselves. Although all the leading producers are Burmans it is a great pity that none of them possesses or controls one single Cinema Theatre in Rangoon. They have to accept whatever terms are offered to them. In taking over the Queen's at about 2½ times the normal rent and voluntarily offering to pay at 3 times the present rent for the Dagon their only object seems to be to shut out all Burmese producers from acquiring either of these Burmese Houses.

It is generally believed that in the present state of the Cinema business in Rangoon which I may say, is not in any way unsatisfactory and which was never better before, it is impossible for Madans or anyone else to make their newly acquired Houses yield actual profit. On the contrary it is believed that they are prepared to lose.

Even from a financial point of view the attempt to corner does not seem to be a success. Messrs. Madan Theatres Limited is a public Company started about 9 years ago in Calcutta with a paid-up capital of 75 lakhs. With the exception of the 1st year of their operation they could not declare any dividend for several years and had to write off their capital by 50 per cent. with the sanction of the High Court since they were able to declare only once a dividend of 5 per cent. on the reduced capital.

Ours is a private Company comparatively very small and with limited cash resources. We conduct our affairs and manage our finances in a business-like way. But we cannot afford to pay a rent almost four times our present rent. The Madans have created an impossible situation. The value of every possible site for erecting a Cinema in the vicinity has gone up 3 to 4 times its normal value. The owners of 1st class lots (115' x 100' and abutting on 3 roads) who are getting rents ranging from Rs. 700 to Rs. 1,200 offer to pull down their present buildings and put up Theatre buildings according to our requirements provided we pay Rs. 3,000 to Rs. 4,000 monthly exclusive of taxes. Sites in other parts of the town, however, prominent they may otherwise be, are not at all profitable for the purpose of erecting Cinemas as the tendency of the cinema-going public is to go only to the place where there are long established Houses almost in a cluster. In this way the monopoly of Messrs. Madans in the exhibition branch is thorough and unassailable by any individual exhibitor or a combination of exhibitors. The natural sequel to this monopoly of controlling all the worth while Cinema Houses is a virtual monopoly of control of films also. The firms of the Pathe and the Universal Pictures Corporation have been long established in India and they import and distribute films all over the country and have their distributing offices in Bombay, Calcutta, Lahore, Madras and Rangoon. Their dealings are quite honourable and in the interest and for the protection of exhibitors. Their films are being pushed out from Rangoon and other parts of Burma. In face of this situation who else can afford to import costly films?

If the attempt to create a monopoly in exhibition succeeds, there will be no encouragement at all for the Burmese producers who have to depend on the terms and conditions that may be dictated to them by the monopolist.

The situation is same or rather in a more tense form in Calcutta and in no way different in Bombay.

By having a virtual monopoly specially in Exhibition and Distribution branches in the Key Cities of Calcutta, Rangoon and Bombay, Madans have a thorough monopoly in the rest of the country where Cinemas are worth running.

Monopoly does not do good to the public. Madans' monopoly is like a death-knell particularly of the independent exhibitors and of the industry in general. It is believed that the idea behind this monopoly of Madans is to dispose of their whole concern to some foreign syndicate. Whatever the idea may be the monopoly should not be tolerated by the Government.

10. The system of "block and blind" bookings exist to a certain extent. Importers of films mostly owing to the practice prevailing in America have to buy films on block and they in turn naturally insist on block booking by the exhibitors. Excepting in Key cities exhibitors in other places have to accept whatever films they are offered. This is called "blind" booking but they have the experience of exhibitors of such film in Key Cities to guide them. Buying films under block-system for one special big film and about 4 Supers a buyer has to accept about 30 just program pictures including some duds out of the whole year's output of one of the American National Producers.

"First Run" Houses are those leading Cinemas where new films are first released or exhibited specially in Key Cities and big towns. Then follows their exhibition in other places, such Houses can also be called "Key Theatres."

Advantages to the trade as well to the public are apparent if independent First Run houses and Key Theatres exist. They help in speedy and advantageous exhibition of films either locally produced or imported. The speedy returns thus obtained will help in developing the industry, and keep the public in touch with the latest development in the picture business which embraces the sciences, literature, inventions and a good many other things worth knowing and enjoying.

11. Exhibitors in this country have not sufficient facilities to preview films except in the importing ports or the producing centres. But as explained above they have the experience of Key Theatre exhibitors to guide them. There is no suggestion that I can think of on this matter. There are fewer possibilities of producing indifferent and dud pictures except by a monopolist firm who alone can exhibit such pictures. People of the locality having no other cinema to go to will have to put up with dud pictures.

12. The Amusement Tax is a sure and certain handicap to the exhibitors. Although it is generally paid by patrons, it tells on the income of the House. In Calcutta and Bombay several Cinemas had to be closed down after this tax came into force. It was just about the time when we started our show in Calcutta that this tax was put into operation. The admission prices were the same as at other leading Cinema Houses but with a view to meet the powerful competition we decided to pay the tax instead of making our patrons pay over and above the admission prices. In this way we paid to the Government over Rs. 28,000 in the first year and about Rs. 37,000 in the 2nd year. On the actual operation of this Theatre we did not make any profit but Government received Rs. 65,000. If this money or a great part of it had been saved to us it would have helped us greatly to develop our business and to import still better class of films. The Empire in Calcutta which is considered to be the leading Theatre in Asia was about to close down as a result of this tax but the Bengal Legislative Council came to its help. The Council had passed a resolution to abolish this tax from Theatres and Cinemas and the Government thereupon exempted the Empire Theatre and some Bengalee Theatre from the operation of the tax but has retained same on Cinemas. My firm has a grievance against the continuance of its imposition on the theatrical shows that are presented on the stage of our Globe Grand Opera House. In the face of the Council resolutions if for the monetary exigency it was not possible to abolish the tax on Cinemas, it is certainly unfair and unreasonable that our patrons should be made to pay the tax when Theatrical Companies use our Theatre. This means preferential treatment to certain Theatres. In our case the inequity is more apparent and its operation harsher.

Cinemas are the main source of amusement and instruction for the general public. To tax the Cinemas has the effect of taxing a form of amusement in which poor and middle classes indulge and deprives that very large section of the public of a legitimate source of innocent and instructive entertainment which they are just able to afford.

While faced with increasing charges on all sides (such as house rents, newspapers advertisements salaries, Import Duty on films and advertising matter) Cinemas have not increased their admission prices. In fact they cannot. The imposition of this tax has caused a large decrease in the number.

of our patrons and in this way the very object of the tax has been defeated. The revenue obtained is insignificant while the loss to the Cinema trade in diminished attendance is great. The law of diminishing returns applies to this particular species of tax more effectively and forcibly than perhaps to any other tax and it thus frustrates its own object. In Bengal the revenue derived by the Entertainment Tax during the first year was Rs. 18,87,000 including Rs. 15,75,000 on races against a total estimate of 84 lacs. In Bombay it yielded only 10 lacs against a budget estimate of 16 lacs.

It may be pointed out that an Amusement Tax was admittedly first introduced in England and America during the Great War, but the incidence has been gradually reduced and it is likely to be abolished in a short time.

Government of Burma had proposed to levy this tax in 1924. The Burma Cinema Trade Association Limited submitted a memorial embodying most of the above facts and the proposal was luckily dropped.

13. The present Customs Tariff on imported films works out to Rs. 37-8 per 1,000 feet. No matter in what condition the film is, brand new costing Rs. 100, second hand costing Rs. 20 or junk costing Rs. 10 yet the import duty is Rs. 37-8. Its incidence on used films is very heavy and works out to almost 375 per cent. and on new films 37½ per cent. *ad valorem*.

The duty now charged does not in my opinion, help to promote the indigenous production of films. However high the tariff wall may be built it will afford no protection to the indigenous production under the present condition of the industry in India. By means of the same high tariff, it would not be possible to shut out undesirable Foreign films.

If however the duty on raw stock of films or what are called unexposed films and apparatus and chemicals used for producing films be reduced this branch of industry will get some measure of relief.

High Duty on photos and posters and all other publicity matter has no justification. It adds to the burden of the Exhibitor. The tariff should be reduced substantially.

14. If the Cinema be utilized for educational purposes and for adult education in Agriculture, Public Health, etc., it would certainly help the growth of the industry. A first class program without an Educational or Industrial or Scientific film is incomplete. There is no real demand for such films but if they be short say 800 to 600 feet no exhibitor will object to include one in his program.

15. Conditions in this country are favourable to the development of an Indian Film producing industry on a fairly large scale. The country is full of history, traditions and mythology and the birth place of some of the biggest religions and to the West it is yet a sealed book of Mystic lore. It has still, in places old customs which in a sense are mystic and romantic. Besides, labour is comparatively cheap, natural light very favourable, scenery, and background charming and its literature is inexhaustible and above all the field for consumption of such product is vast.

16. I think there are some Indian producers, directors, actors and actresses and scenario-writers able to produce films of the class and quality that is required by the public patronising such films. To improve the quality of their output and make it generally acceptable by all classes of people in India and other Countries technical experts must be brought out from Europe and America and Indians must be trained under them. In my opinion the most effectual way to supply this want and to encourage indigenous production would be for the Government to establish first class state-studios at centres like Bombay and Rangoon, equipped with the latest appliances and manned with technical experts from Europe and America, and hire them out to private concerns to produce their films at a reasonable rent which will cover their maintenance expenses. Services and advice of the Government Technical Experts should also be made available for private producers. This measure will also enable the state to produce educational, industrial, agricultural, public health and other films which, otherwise, private concerns will not care to produce as there is very little return from such films.

17. If facilities like what I suggested above exist and if there is a sufficient number of independent exhibitors existing in the Key Cities and other towns, the capital which is very shy now, will be forthcoming for film production.

18. I consider that suitable Government action in addition to the establishment of state studios and engagement of technical experts will be an effective incentive and encouragement to private enterprise for film production. One thing more than any other I wish to impress is that unless and until the monopoly in exhibition and distribution which undoubtedly exists is broken, there will be no independent Exhibitors in Key Cities and other towns and if there are no independent exhibitors in fairly good numbers there will not be any incentive or encouragement for film producing in this country. The Government can also help in the following ways:—

- (1) By granting State Scholarships to deserving persons to proceed to Europe and America to study the technique of the trade.
- (2) By advancing loans on easy terms to deserving and reliable producers as well as exhibitors.
- (3) By abolishing the Amusement Tax on Cinemas.
- (4) By reducing the Import duty on raw materials and other appliances used for the purpose of producing films.

19. A comparison of the cost of film production in this country with that in other countries under vastly different conditions, will not help us much. A film drama of say about 8,000 feet featuring popular actors and actresses costs about Rs. 10,000 to Rs. 15,000 in this country whereas in Great Britain an average film-drama costs somewhere from £5,000 to £10,000 and in U. S. A. about £50,000. Supers and Star productions cost very much more on account of huge salaries paid to Stars and Producers and for rights for stories.

20. (a) It is an admitted fact that the Cinema is a public utility; and films a powerful means of education, entertainment and propaganda. It is therefore most essential that Government should undertake expenditure from Government Funds.

(b) The whole or a great part of the amount of duty collected on the import of the films and accessories may be spent for the above purpose. Of course there should not be any fresh taxation on this score.

21. As stated above a monopoly does not do any good to the public nor will a state monopoly. Private enterprise will be crippled by any sort of monopoly but however in case Government is unable to break the existing monopoly by a legislative or administrative measure I would suggest that Government should step in and establish a centralised neutral agency for distributing purposes until such time as the different branches of the industry become thoroughly established.

Films of the British Commonwealth.

22. We are whole-heartedly in favour of the policy outlined in the resolution of the Imperial Conference to give some small measure of encouragement to British Empire films provided similar encouragement is given to local films.

22. (a) Yes, it will assist the development of India's own film industry by exchange of films.

(b) Certainly it will help India to make herself better known and understood throughout the Empire and the world.

In this connection I take this opportunity to quote the message given to the British-world by our ex-Governor Sir Harcourt Butler, viz., "The Cinema":—

"I consider that the presentation throughout the Empire of films illustrative of the physical geography, life and institutions of the different parts of the Empire is a work of the highest importance for which there is urgent need."

(c) I am afraid this measure will not improve the standard of American films as the Indian market is of very small importance to America.

Reciprocity in films illustrative of physical geography, life and institutions in the beginning and on a larger scale when India is able to produce films of the same entertaining quality as those of the West.

23. (a) I suggest that the Cinema be introduced in every school and college and films portraying conditions, resources and habits of the peoples and activities of the various Governments of the British Empire be shown there. This will help a great deal in educating students in Geography and general knowledge of the different parts of the Empire as well as India.

(b) Various Governments should exchange such films of their respective countries.

PART II.

Social aspects and control.

24. (a) I am not aware of any class of films exhibited in this country that has a demoralising or otherwise injurious effect upon the public.

(b) To my knowledge generally there is no circulation of immoral or criminally suggestive films. If such films are imported they cannot escape detection nor evade censorship.

(c) Films depicting crimes without its detection and punishment, films with racial questions, films with inflammatory subjects are harmful to the general public.

(d) The existing censorship is quite adequate in the cases of (1) "Sex" films and (2) "Crime" films.

(e) There is apparently no increase of crime in Burma due to the Cinema on the contrary, I recollect, about 14 years ago when Cinema in Rangoon were just getting popular, a police report made a mention that there had been a marked decrease in crimes in Rangoon.

25. I do not consider that the difference in social customs and outlook between the West and the East necessitates special consideration in the censorship of films in this country. The films portraying society life are exhibited only at First Class Houses or Key Theatres and as the patrons of "Key Theatres" are mostly educated they are in a position to understand and appreciate the differences. Such films if shown at other Houses fall flat with the majority of their patrons.

26. (a) The care exercised by the present boards is sufficient.

(b) "Life of Buddha" offended the religious susceptibilities of Burmans (Buddhists).

27. (a) The producers of Western films are Westerners themselves and they are not likely to misrepresent their own civilization. Further these films are examined by Boards of Censors of which the majority of members are Europeans and they are not likely to allow misrepresentation of their own civilization. Further a great proportion of the audiences are Westerners and if they thought their civilization is misrepresented or derided they would not patronize the Houses exhibiting such films. On the contrary there is distinct tendency in a majority of films dealing with Eastern people to misrepresent their civilization their social customs and their morals. Practically in every one of the films in which the two civilizations are brought face to face, it is always at the expense of the Eastern civilization.

(b) I do not know of any, but if a film adapted from the book "Mother India" be produced in a foreign country. Film producers are generally on the look out for stories and materials for their pictures and the books which have a wide circulation and cause greatest criticisms and create sensation are bought at once at enormously big prices and made into films and same released as early as possible in order to gain advantage when the topic is fresh in the minds of the people. A film like this is sure to do possibly more harm than the book itself to foreign opinion on the civilization of India.

28. Films which portray violent love affairs or crimes which remain undetected and unpunished or disrespect towards parents and teachers are harmful to (a) children and (b) adolescents. But such films have no chance of passing the test of censorship.

29. I am in favour of certain films being certified "For Adults Only" but in very rare cases, I remember having seen the stage play of "Damaged Goods" which had been first banned and then allowed to be staged. To my mind the play was so very impressive and carried its lesson so vividly that I considered it far far better that 100 sermons from the pulpit or a 1,000 speeches from morality leagues. Some years after a British film based on the same play was imported into India and a lot of fuss was unnecessarily created by censorship boards. It was passed after having been cut and clipped. If such films (which can be called morality-films) be certified "For Adults Only" the public will be immensely benefited.

30. There is a very small percentage of children visiting cinemas and these too are accompanied either by their parents or guardians so that there is no reason to prohibit them.

31. (a) Censorship is an effective method of guarding against misuse of the film, if it is exercised in a sympathetic manner.

32. The present system of censorship in Burma is in my opinion satisfactory. Its constitution needs some improvement. The members nominated or elected must be broad minded and sympathetic towards this rising industry.

33. A strict censorship would decidedly (a) interfere unreasonably with the recreation of the people (b) and would lead to a falling off in the attendance at Cinemas (c) and would unduly hamper the freedom required for artistic and inspirational development.

34. (a) I would not advocate the replacement of the present Provincial Boards of Censor by a single Central Board.

(b) because films are produced in main ports namely Rangoon, Calcutta and Bombay and as soon as a film passes from its last stage of production it requires to be immediately certified and exhibited in order to get immediate cash return. If the Central Board is situated in any city other than Rangoon, the Burmese Producer whose capital and resources are limited can ill afford to wait until his film comes back certified by the Central Board situated hundreds and perhaps thousands of miles away. Certain scene or scenes may require replacing by this Board, it will be a real hardship to a producer situated as he is in Burma at such a distance. Further it will be difficult to have a Burman Member on the Central Board. Similar difficulties would confront an importer of foreign or British films; (2) conditions and customs, etc., of different provinces may require different and special treatment in some instances and for this purpose the present system or Provincial Boards should continue and they should be interdependent on one another but I wish to make it clear that there is no necessity at all for an independent Board in Burma.

(b) Rather than a Central Board I would suggest that an appellate Board in addition to the Provincial Boards be constituted to whom appeals against unfavourable decisions like the one in the recent case of our film "Triumph of the Rat" be made and disputes amongst the Provincial Boards be referred to.

(d) Either from the Educational grants or Police budgets but it is for the Government to decide.

35. (a) The present constitution of the Provincial Boards is not, in my opinion, satisfactory. It should be less official and more popular. The Cinema Exhibitors and producers must have each a representative and local newspapers must have one. The Burma Cinema Trade Association Limited had carried on protracted negotiations with the Burma Government 6 years ago with a view to get a representative on the Board for the Association. The Association was ultimately allowed to send a member to the meetings of the Board but without voting power. It was useless to exercise this right with-

out the power to vote and so no representative has ever been sent to the Board meetings.

(b) I am not in favour of a whole-time paid officer as Censor at each centre however experienced and well-paid he may be.

36. (a) I have personal experience of the system now prevailing in Calcutta under which films are examined by Inspectors subordinate to the Board.

(b) I think the system prevailing in Rangoon of all films being examined by two members of the Board is far preferable. I consider gentlemen of suitable standing are really available who are prepared to devote sufficient time to the examination of films for a reasonable remuneration.

37. (a) There are adequate safeguards under the act for preventing the exhibition of films which may be objectionable locally, although it has been passed by a Board in some other part of India. The Burma Board has exercised this right rather too often and rejected several films.

(b) No more safe-guards are needed.

38. Yes.

39. Yes, a British Picture "Afraid of Love" featuring the Hon'ble Mrs. John Russell of "Russell Baby" fame was produced immediately after the court case was over. It was generally disapproved by exhibitors in England but was brought out and shown in India. Another instance is that of an American picture called "Big Parade" which shows that America won the Great War. This also was disapproved in England and totally banned in Australia. It is being shown in India.

40. Posters are received along with imported films, they are not made here and no one except perhaps some ultra-puritan has really found anything objectionable in posters. Cinema advertisements in newspapers are generally subject to scrutiny of the papers and if an advertisement or the reproduction of a block is offensive they refuse to publish it. Censoring of posters, hand-bills and advertisements will interfere unnecessarily with the freedom of the Exhibitors. This matter should be left to the good sense of the exhibitors. The authorities have already sufficient power to stop immediately offensive and otherwise objectionable advertisements or posters.

41. The General tone of the films exhibited in India in recent year is better than what it was some years ago.

42. It will create mutual good feeling and trust if the co-operation of the trade in the matter of the Censorship be enlisted. I have suggested above that the Board should include 2 members of the trade.

43. (a), (b), (c) So far there is no need for a stricter control over the import and export of films.

44. The Press represents the voice of the people. Impartial weekly criticisms in the amusement columns of different newspapers in Rangoon assist in maintaining quite a good standard of films.

45. (a) Government control over film production without first creating facilities for production by the State will unnecessarily interfere with the development of this branch of the Cinema industry.

(b) So far there is no reason for it. On the question of censorship of films controversies arose in Rangoon recently and same was given publication in the "Rangoon Gazette." I take this opportunity to attach with my above statement the various numbers* of the "Rangoon Gazette" in which correspondence and editorials appeared. The editorials in my opinion are the most effective and conclusive reply to the often raised question of stricter censorship and my request to the Committee is that this controversy should be read as a part of this statement. Following are the numbers:—

"Rangoon Gazette" of March 26th, 29th, 30th†, 1927.

"Rangoon Gazette" of October 18th, 19th, 21st, 22nd, 24th, 25th, 26th, 1927.

*Not reprinted.

†Collected and published in our Globe Budget of Saturday, 2nd April 1927.

Oral Evidence of Mr. F. H. SIDHWA, Managing Director, Globe Theatres, Ltd., of India, Burma and Ceylon, on Saturday, the 21st January 1928.

Chairman: You are the Managing Director of the Globe Theatres, Limited, at Rangoon?

A. Yes.

Q. I suppose it is a limited Company?

A. Yes, it is a private limited Company. Formerly it was a partnership.

Q. You are connected with cinemas and theatres only and nothing else?

A. I am not connected with any other business. The Company also does not deal in any other business.

Q. I suppose you have got about 35 cinema houses all over India and Burma?

A. Yes, we supply films to about 35 theatres.

Q. And do you own any of these theatres yourself?

A. We hold theatres on lease. We don't own any ourselves.

Q. Are all these theatres run under your direct management or are they worked in association with you?

A. Some are worked in association and some independently but we supply pictures to all these.

Q. How many theatres belong to your company?

A. We have one in Rangoon, two in Moulmein, one in Mandalay, one in Mymgan, one in Calcutta, one in Bangalore, and one in Bombay which was only opened last night by His Excellency the Governor.

Q. So, these are all actually managed by your concern?

A. Yes.

Q. In supplying films do you supply under any contract that all these theatres should get their films only from you?

A. Not generally. We give the whole supply to some theatres and partial supply to others.

Q. So that some theatres who take pictures from you are at liberty to take from others also?

A. Yes.

Q. Are any of the theatres bound to take pictures from you alone exclusively?

A. Yes, there are about 10 or 12 small houses like that, who are under exclusive contract with us.

Q. Do you suffer from the evils of block-booking of the Western pictures as they do in England? Are you forced to take all the pictures that are produced by a firm with whom you have entered into a block-booking contract?

A. We do suffer in a way. Unless we agree to take about 75 to 80 per cent. of the output of a concern we don't get good pictures at all.

Q. Do you get your pictures directly from the producer and are they exhibited here in Burma or India soon after they are released in their respective countries?

A. Soon after they are produced they are first shown in America or other countries where they are produced.

Q. What interval takes place ordinarily?

A. Six months or a year, sometimes longer.

Q. Probably in cases of urgent need when you ask for the same you get some pictures within a few weeks after production?

A. In many cases we are enabled to show British pictures before they are exhibited in Britain itself. Some pictures, soon after they are produced and "Trade-shown", are sent out to this country and India.

Q. That is because of the fact that London is under a contract with America and so they find it impossible to screen their own productions, I suppose?

A. Yes, it is so.

Q. What about British productions? Do you have any block-booking with them?

A. There is no block-booking so far with British productions. Perhaps, when Britain manufactures pictures on a large scale, probably the British Producers may insist on block-booking contracts.

Q. Have you entered into any block-booking contract at all for the year 1928?

A. We have selected a few pictures from different producers but we have not entered into any block-booking contract.

Q. So you have not entered into any contract for the last two or three years?

A. No, not in the strict sense of the term.

Q. So you have opportunities of knowing beforehand the value of the pictures?

A. Yes, because we keep in touch with all the Trade journals and other literature on the subject, and besides we have our agents in London and New York.

Q. Is there any evil, from your experience, resulting to you or to the public by any system of block-booking in India or Burma?

A. To a certain extent there is some evil, though to a small extent probably.

Q. Do you think legislation should come in at all in that direction?

A. I don't think there is any need yet.

Q. So, you think you can take care of yourselves as time rolls on?

A. Yes, I think so.

Q. You have complained very much of Madans monopoly in your statement. I have gone through your statement very carefully. Notwithstanding their monopoly you have thrived well all these years—in fact you have been increasing your business. They also have naturally been increasing their business, that is all. What is your complaint?

A. We can certainly stand against fair competition as we have stood so far. But I feel it is almost cut-throat competition to pay four times over our head. I say it is not business-like at all, sir.

Q. Don't you think there is rivalry between you and Madans?

A. Yes, there is business rivalry.

Q. So much so, possibly, that it has deepened into personal rivalry?

A. Not at all, sir. There is absolutely no personal rivalry at all.

Q. You have taken some theatres yourself which Madans sought, I suppose?

A. No, we have not done so at all. In Bombay, Madans tried to run the Gaiety theatre for some time and they left it afterwards and it was only after they left management of that theatre that we took it over.

Q. What about Moulmein, you took over a theatre which was previously sought for or run by the Madans?

A. No, not at all. On the contrary Madans tried to take one of our theatres there over our heads.

Q. It is after all a competition by two sets of people in the same trade. What is the unfairness in it at all?

Mr. Green: The witness says, it is cut throat competition.

Chairman: They are the best judges of what they should do with their money. After all it is a public Company and they are only increasing their business?

A. Supposing we paid Rs. 1,000 for a theatre as rent every month and if they offered say, Rs. 200 or even 500 more, then we can understand it. But to go and offer more than three times what we are at present paying, may I ask, "Is it not trying to ruin our business?"

Q. It is probably unusual, that is all?

A. It is absolutely unheard of in this business.

Q. Probably you are referring to the recent taking over of the Globe in Rangoon by Madans?

A. Yes.

Q. Now we were told that the matter was advertised in the local papers sufficiently long?

A. It was no doubt advertised, but I should think it was all pre-arranged.

Q. How can you say it was all pre-arranged? That is a mere suspicion on your part, I suppose?

A. I have seen the Manager of Madans going after the proprietors of the theatre for a long time.

Q. The other day a Burmese theatre gentleman told us that he also made an offer for that theatre?

A. I might say that we had held three leases already with the proprietors for that theatre. On none of those occasions was it advertised in the papers.

Q. That may be because the landlord might have become more shrewd now?

A. I don't think so, sir.

Q. You have heard of the great Steamship combine in England of Lord Inchcape. There was a good deal of public protest against that.

A. I can only express my opinion with regard to my business.

Q. I don't think any part of the world is free from such competition?

A. Well, if competition is fair it is alright. In fact we have succeeded and thrived in all fair competitions.

Q. Then would you advocate a rule like this: No one company should own more than 50 per cent. of the theatres in any particular place?

A. I would place it at a much lower ratio, say 30 per cent.

Q. There are not so many people who go in for these cinemas, probably you are the only one with the exception of Madans who have invested money in their business in this trade?

A. No, that is not so. There are many others in the field.

Q. Well, it is very difficult to interfere with private efforts of that sort. The state does not come in unless there are very strong grounds for interference?

A. But don't you think this sort of unhealthy competition should be discouraged? I might add that we started our business in Rangoon and our prosperity commenced in this town. So to lose the only theatre which we had in this town (and that because of unfair competition) is very serious to us.

Q. I quite understand your position. Why don't you take up the other house which is being built now next to the Excelsior?

A. Possibly you don't know. Madans have almost taken over that also. They want to have a monopoly in this city over every theatre. They don't want to have any rival here at all.

Q. Well, anyway, leaving that matter at that—I notice that you consider the middle and the lower classes of people are the largest patrons of the cinemas?

A. Yes that is so.

Q. And you don't think they will stand any further strain on their purse if by any action of Government or other agency, theatre managers are compelled to raise the entrance rates?

A. They can't very well stand it, but if by any monopoly, one particular firm owns the majority of the good theatres in any one town, then the people will have no other place to go to but will have to pay the enhanced rates.

Q. And do you consider that the taste which once existed for Serials is now disappearing in favour of indigenous productions, Indian or Burman, and feature films and social dramas are becoming more popular?

A. Yes.

Q. Is it where sex relations play a prominent part?

A. Well, the majority of social pictures have such scenes.

Q. You say that illiterate classes of people don't go to these social dramas. But most people complain that the illiterate or the uneducated people are likely to misunderstand and misjudge the West?

A. The majority of the audience who attend these shows are not illiterate men, but nearly 85 per cent. of the audience are from the European and Anglo-Indians and educated classes of Indians and Burmans.

Q. So any attempt to tone down the moral side of those pictures would affect the educated classes and not the illiterate classes of people who visit the cinemas?

A. Yes, that is so. That is my own experience for the last 15 years in this line.

Q. The illiterate people enjoy the Comics, I suppose, and there is no harm in them?

A. Yes, they enjoy comics very well and there is no harm in them.

Q. You say there is no harm in anything now shown. That is your point of view?

A. Well, that is my experience, sir.

Q. So much is said of the way in which these cinemas are depicted. Comment is freely made that the pictures of the Los Angeles type are inferior and all that. Do you think it is a genuine statement or is it merely a trade stunt in order to advance one country's goods? Do you think there is any difference in the way in which social life is treated by one country and another?

A. I believe so in a way. The tone of the British picture is better. As a whole, British pictures are better, compared with American and other pictures. Of course we are exhibiting both American and British pictures.

Q. Could you tell me a British picture which deals with social life which depicts the under-world life?

A. The film "The Rat" is one such.

Q. You consider "The Rat" is typical of British films in the way in which they deal with British social problems? Do you consider that a better film than the American way of dealing with the subject?

A. I should think it is on the same level.

Q. And "The Rat" is the most recent production of Britain dealing with British social life?

A. Yes, I think so.

Q. Could you give me an instance of a British film which deals with the social life which you consider is dealt with in a better aspect?

A. "London Love" is one such production. It is really a very fine picture.

Q. When did you get it?

A. It was a 1926 production. We got it exhibited in February 1927.

Q. So you would advise us to see that picture to form our own conclusions?

A. Yes, I would.

Q. That, you consider, a better way of dealing with the subject of under-world life, I suppose?

A. Yes.

Q. How many British films have you imported for exhibition in this country recently?

A. During the last four or five years we have imported about 100 British films, say on an average of 20 every year, films on an average ranging between 7,000 and 8,000 feet long.

Q. Have you any rough idea of how many western films come to India and Burma every year?

A. I cannot say definitely but I believe about 200 western films come out to India every year, on an average 7,000 to 8,000 feet each.

Q. Of these how many will be British films?

A. Say about 20 of them.

Q. And there is a tendency to import more British films?

A. Well, British films have improved in quality recently and therefore there is a tendency to import more.

Q. Can you tell me how many British films are in circulation in India?

A. All films which were imported might be in circulation. Films which were brought in here 2 or 3 years ago or even more may still be in circulation in India and Burma.

Q. How long do Western films circulate in India?

A. It all depends on how films are handled.

Q. Take a film like the "London Love". In England its novelty might get worn out easily, but it may not be the case here or in India?

A. It may be in circulation in India for a longer time because the field is very limited here. In England and America the same picture is not generally shown in more than one theatre in any one town, and so circulation takes a shorter time there, but here in India it is not the case and moreover India is a vast country.

Q. Do you import cheap films also?

A. Yes, we sometimes import second-hand films also. Importations were large before but now the heavy import duty works as a hardship on the cheap films.

Q. So you say that there is a distinct taste growing now for indigenous films?

A. Yes. And there must be a fall in the number of western films imported if the people are trained to indigenous films in preference to western films.

Q. Then there must be a fall in the footage of western films imported?

A. Yes, that is the point.

Q. But the figures don't show that?

A. Because the trade is increasing.

Mr. Green: The audience is increasing. That means more houses are being opened?

A. Yes.

Q. Surely a supply of cheap foreign films in the market must be a sign of competition for local productions. In that case there will be a distinct falling off in the attendance in houses where indigenous films are exhibited, specially among the Burman and Indian audience.

A. No. A greater number of these people will go to see the indigenous films.

Chairman: You think therefore that cultivating this taste and encouraging the growth of this taste is worthwhile?

A. Yes.

Q. Suppose a quota compelling every exhibitor to show a certain length of indigenous film in the week or in the month in his theatre, were introduced in order to gradually increase the production of this sort of film. How would you approve of it?

A. I do not quite approve of it. Because in that case a certain portion of the audience would not like it. In some of these "first-run" theatres if they were to show an Indian film as the main film it will fall flat there. It won't attract the audience which usually go there. In my own case, I showed a Burmese film at our Rangoon Globe Theatre because the actors in that film were Europeans. A pair called Doros Duo acted in it. They were very popular artistes, and as dancers they performed at our Rangoon theatre for six or eight weeks at different times. These two were acting in the film and I thought the film would go very well. But I was mistaken. People did not like the film though they liked the artistes on the stages. Because the film was not produced in a manner to suit their taste.

Q. What was the subject matter?

A. It was a sort of melodrama. The story was about some of the Chinese smuggling opium.

Q. That is not a very happy thing?

A. But people do not care what subject it is. They go only for amusement. It all depends upon the way a subject is treated.

Q. You think therefore that the quota system will be a hardship on the cinema?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you think that facilities should be created for Indian troops to visit the cinema? We are told that they get very little chance.

A. We give them a concession also. We admit them at half rates. But the Indian troops have not got the cinema habit yet.

Q. In your statement you have advocated the policy of Government establishing first-class studios which can be availed of by private producers also. Do you think that will be a well-meant effort?

A. Yes. In fact I got this idea from a movement in England where they have been asking for a first-class national studio.

Q. I believe in Canada also they have got one like that. You think that this will be a good idea?

A. Yes.

Q. One of the witnesses yesterday said that it is only persons who cannot afford their own studios who will welcome this whereas a man who was able to have a good studio himself would consider it as unfair competition.

A. In my experience I find that many of the best producers, say people like Madans, do not attempt anything in that direction. I don't think Government will be competing. When the time comes when people are sufficiently trained, Government can as well hand over their studio to a private concern.

Q. Yes, they can just show how to do it. That is the object of Government pioneering in any industry.

A. From my experience I think that will be most useful.

Q. There is another point on which I require your matured opinion, which would be the better method of training our people—should the Government send them abroad so that they may see the actual conditions there and learn or should they send for an expert to train our young men and women here?

A. I read the evidence of a witness in Bombay who complained that America and England were not quite prepared to admit a youth from this country and train him.

Q. That probably depends on the individuals concerned. Views on this point differed there.

A. I prefer to import technical experts. This could easily be done if Government had a studio here. At the same time they can also send out some boys. I think that both systems might well be adopted. If we can afford it the adoption of both the methods will be better.

Colonel Crawford: What is your opinion about the moral tone of these films? I understand your point is with reference to the under-world des-

criptions. Out of so many British films you have only one film dealing with the under-world whereas in American films a larger number of them dealt with such things. In the British you have only one solitary example?

A. Yes.

Q. In answer to question 4 you state that when an exhibitor is not able to cater adequately it is mainly due to difficulties in getting a good class of films either imported or locally produced. Then you go on to speak about the existence of the monopoly. Would you explain that? What are the difficulties in getting a good class of imported films?

A. The difficulties are on account of the monopoly. There are certain people in America known as national producers. They are big producers like the United Artists, Metro-Goldwyn and others. These prefer to run their films on a percentage basis in a large number of places all over the country. Of course for people like us it is very difficult to get what you call "selected films". It is also there that the monopoly comes in.

Q. Do I understand you to say that Madans are getting films from America?

A. From most of the big American producers.

Q. Can Madans take all the output of America?

A. They have got 3 big companies, United Artists, Metro-Goldwyn and the Paramount.—Madans take all the films produced by them. We are given the refusal of about 20 per cent.

Q. Do they take all the rest?

A. They have to take all the 75 per cent. or 80 per cent.

Q. How many films do each of those companies produce?

A. United Artists produce very few films—something between 10 and 24; Metro-Goldwyn from 52 to 65; Paramount produce about 80 or 85 a year. The total comes to about 160 from all those companies.

Q. They cannot show 160 films every year?

A. Madans have got different theatres where they can show these. They can consume the whole of that.

Q. Do you also bid for these?

A. We cannot bid against them. In fact we did but did not succeed.

Q. You can make an offer?

A. But Madans outbid us always. The next in importance is the "First National." They have an office in Bombay. Universal cannot be counted in the first class. "Famous players" and "Paramount" are both one and the same organisation.

Chairman: Now about 750 films per year are produced by the States. How many do Madans take? About 120 to 150 a year?

A. They should take this.

Q. Do they consume the whole of it?

A. Yes. They hire from the Universal and the First National also.

Colonel Crawford: This is with regard to American films. There are independent film producers also?

A. They produce films, but their films are not up to the mark. Even in big companies all the films are not up to the mark.

Q. Turning now from that, there is the rest of the world market. There is Germany.

A. Germany also is going to the Block-making system. That is due to there being in Germany a very powerful producing company and they are dictating terms to the exhibitors.

Q. Do you take any pictures from them?

A. We took two. One was "The Last Laugh". The defect in that picture was that it depicted the story without any subtitles. It was very artistic and very well done but it fell flat here. There was also another

film which was banned here.—“Peter the Corsair”. It was a sea story. It was banned because its moral tone was thought not up to the mark by the Censors.

Q. When a picture like that is banned, have you got any agreement to return it to the producer?

A. The facility in that direction is very limited, sir. It is conditioned that it should be returned if not accepted within a certain date. But sometimes we do not get the film at all before that particular date. We are given 2 or 3 months after the shipment. Sometimes the films themselves do not arrive here before that time.

Q. Why not extend that time?

A. We are trying to extend it but it is very difficult since the producers do not agree.

Q. Have you tried any other? What about “Metropolis”.

A. They insist on our buying a certain number of films. We must purchase at least 10, 15 or 20 in order to get one outstanding film like “Metropolis”.

Q. What about other German pictures?

A. Somehow I find there is some prejudice here against German pictures. I can say that from my experience of “The Last Laugh”. I think they did not like it because it was a German production.

Q. Have you shown many locally produced films?

A. It is not our policy to go in generally for this kind of film. We are catering for Europeans and educated classes.

Q. Why don't you own a Burmese house?

A. Madans shut us out from getting a house for Burmese pictures.

Q. In answer to question 5 you suggest that precensoring of film stories and plots before actual production means hardship.

A. Yes to a certain extent.

Q. Now the producer before producing a film and after writing the scenario of the film can just present it to the authorities in order to satisfy himself that the film if produced would be passed without any objection. In that case would it not be an advantage to the producer? Because if he produces the film and afterwards it is censored it means much loss to him.

A. While they are producing a film they cannot always stick strictly to the scenario. They have to change certain scenes and there may be alterations in the action also. So the result is it would not in the end be the original scenario.

Q. In Bombay a film based on a court case was produced but had to be banned. If the story had been first submitted to the Censors this would not have happened.

A. In this connection I remember a film in which Mrs. Russell featured. A divorce case was going on in court in England. A film was produced featuring the said Mrs. Russell and placed on the market as soon as the case was over. But the British exhibitors would not show the film.

Chairman: In such cases where a case is under trial actually when a drama or film is produced it need not go to the Censor Board at all. Any amateur lawyer will say that it is against law. It will be contempt of Court.

Colonel Crawford: Still I hold the view that if the scenario is submitted for the perusal of the Censor Board before the film is actually produced much waste of money and waste of time might be saved.

A. I don't believe it would improve the matter. I cannot change my view, I fear, in that respect.

Chairman: In one case it might be beneficial and in another case it might be a difficulty. Is that your point?

A. Yes. Let them take the risk if they produce an objectionable film.

Colonel Crawford: You say there is much room for improvement in the indigenous films. When you talk of improvement will that improvement cost the producer more money?

A. Yes. He has to spend more money.

Q. If he is going to spend much more money, has he got a sufficient market to get a good return for the amount he spends? Supposing an Indian producer or a Burmese producer spends a lakh or a lakh and a half on a film. Do you think he will get a good return from his limited Indian market?

A. Speaking about Burma, it will never pay any one to spend that money on any picture. There is a very limited market here. Generally Burmese pictures do not go out of Burma.

Q. What do you put down as the maximum then if one wants to get back the money he invests?

A. At the most 30 to 40 thousand. That is the absolute maximum.

Q. On that amount can he raise his film to the western standard?

A. No, he can never hope to raise his films to the western standard. Still he can improve his present quality.

Chairman: Will you be able to attract the educated Burmans to it?

A. Yes. I find in India some of the Indian films are attracting the educated Indians.

Colonel Crawford: So it is a point which appears to me that the Indian producer has only a very limited market where he can exhibit his productions and that he cannot spend the requisite money to raise the quality of his film to that of the films produced in the West.

A. Yes.

Q. And as the cinema industry grows, the Indian public and the Burmans will demand something better and if the local producer cannot give it, he would return once more to the western pictures. Is that a possibility?

A. There is that possibility. But yet the Burmese are very nationalistic in their views and they will support the Burman industry. They are very patriotic and they may even boycott western pictures.

Q. How long will that spirit remain? That might give a temporary advantage.

A. It will remain, I should think, till the quality of the Burmese pictures is gradually improved. Already the Burmese films are getting popular amongst the Burmans. There are so many mushroom companies which have tried and given up the idea. What generally happens in Burma is, 10 or 15 people join together and start a small concern, work with zeal and produce a film. There are 2 or 3 first class companies which have got a good name. Of course it is also a fact that the exhibition market is very limited and there is also this monopoly question. Monopoly is dangerous to the indigenous producer. Apart from that there is this question of quality. If they cannot improve it we are likely to lose even our present popularity.

Q. But how to improve it? The market is very limited.

A. My experience of indigenous films in Burma market is this: the Burma market is able to pay any expenditure up to 30,000 or 40,000 on a film when the quality is improved. The producer can spend only up to that amount as I have already said.

Q. What is the total population of Burma? Will it be 20 millions?

A. One crore and 15 or 20 lakhs. That is to say 12 millions. I quite agree that this is an insufficient market.

Q. You think then that the Burman market is quite sufficient for the Burmese production?

A. To a certain limit.

Q. It has not to find some other market?

A. If we improve in quality, of course there will be a good market for the Burmese films in Buddhist countries like Siam or Ceylon. We can even take our films to China; but I do not know whether films showing the habits and customs of people here will appeal to the Chinese.

Q. Is there anything to prevent the Burman producer from producing films to suit all circumstances?

A. Unless and until he has gained the necessary experience, I don't think he can.

Q. Taking it for granted that he has the necessary experience, can he produce in his country films to satisfy an international audience?

A. A man who wants to produce films with a universal appeal must be a very clever man and he must know the tastes, habits and customs of people of other countries.

Q. Let us take "The Thief of Baghdad". It is a film with universal appeal—it appeals both to the East and to the West?

A. It appeals more to the East than to the West.

Q. There is nothing then to prevent a Burman producer from producing a film of that sort?

A. They have not got the necessary capital, experience, skill and resources and there is the uncertainty of producing other such films.

Q. Uncertainty of the market also?

A. Yes.

Chairman: Can he always be producing pictures like "The Thief of Baghdad"? Can even the best equipped man be producing such films always?

A. It is the story that appeals more than anything else in that picture.

Q. So even the best producers will have to produce second-rate pictures?

A. Yes; they do produce second-rate things.

Colonel Crawford: I quite appreciate that point. But whilst producing films, cheaper films for the local market, if he can also produce films of universal appeal, it will be strengthening his position. He will get something from the local market and something also from the outside market. I want to know if there is any practical possibility of such an event coming off?

A. Not for many years to come.

Q. In the meantime he may die because the market has not begun yet?

A. If he goes on spending more money than he should, of course he will die out.

Q. Do you think it would be possible for the local Burman producer here to get into touch with some of the western countries with a view to taking them into partnership and producing some films for the west, i.e., production here for marketing in the West?

A. I could cite the instance of one company which came down to Bombay for this purpose and in fact they erected a studio there. The same thing could be done here also.

Q. Is that the line on which you think the Burmese producer should develop, if he wants to keep on his legs?

A. Yes. That is the line. I am giving an instance as to how that is possible. That company brought out a certain number of artists and technical experts and they tried to produce pictures in Bombay; but somehow or other—perhaps the climate did not suit them or perhaps the business was not paying—they closed it and went away. That company was even registered in Bombay, if I remember aright, but before they could produce even a single picture, they had to go away.

Q. Were you a Burman producer yourself?

A. No.

Q. If you were, in order to maintain a supply for the Burman market and in order to give your company good profits, would you co-operate with some western producer or renter or exhibitor for the production of films in Burma for the western market?

A. With their help, I think it is possible.

Q. But is it desirable?

A. I think it is most desirable. For the local producer it would be a move in the right direction. It would show him the business.

Q. Now I will take you to the question of finance. Finance is one of the great obstacles to the production industry, and you say that there are several reasons for that. What are those reasons?

A. I say that the capital is shy.

Q. You say in your answer, to question 8 (b), "owing to want of confidence in the industry by the investing public for which there are several good reasons". What are those reasons?

A. The failure of some of the companies and the unsatisfactory results shown by Madan Theatres, Ltd., in this business.

Q. Unsatisfactory financial results?

A. Yes.

Q. That is due to the limited market?

A. The market is the same for the investing public just now.

Q. It is one of the reasons why finance is shy?

A. Yes, this business has shaken the faith of those who invested money in it.

Q. I want to know the reason why it is not paying?

A. Perhaps the management is not good or they have not been able to conduct the business in the way they should.

Q. Perhaps a good business man could do it?

A. That is what I believe.

Q. But if he is a business man, he may not find sufficient profit in this business?

A. That may be possible in this business at present, as it is.

Q. Owing to the limited market?

A. Yes.

Q. And a wider vision and a wider outlook on the part of the producers seeking a much bigger market would give some scope for profit?

A. Yes, it will.

Q. I notice you say that the key centres in India are Calcutta, Rangoon and Bombay. You would not include Colombo?

A. No; I do not believe it imports even a hundredth part of what India does when we buy we buy for India, Burma and Ceylon.

Q. You don't think Colombo is a key city?

A. I don't think so. There is not sufficient business there. There are very few cinemas in Ceylon.

Q. Do you think the present censorship is all right? Do you think there is anything to make a central board imperative?

A. I would like an appellate central board in addition to the provincial boards.

Q. You desire to have stipendiary censors?

A. I prefer honorary censors.

Mr. Green: On the question of censorship, supposing we had here in Rangoon two highly qualified stipendiary censors, whole-time officers, both of whom should see a film, so that it would not be a question of one man's judgment, and in the case of any difference or doubt in their minds,

the case was to be referred to an advisory board, something like the present; do you think that will be more efficient?

A. My opinion is based on the system prevailing now in Calcutta where there is a paid inspector. His assistant does not do inspecting of films, he is only a sort of a clerk. If you are going to provide here two stipendiary censors and both of them are to sit together and examine each film, of course I would not object to that.

Q. Further, it might be advantageous in that you will get consistency of judgment. You have now in Burma a board consisting of eight members?

A. Yes.

Q. Two members may see a film one day and another two the same film the next day; and their opinions may differ. This means a reference to the full board which will take a long time and will give less consistent results, if you rely upon inspection by the full board?

A. I do not know if there is any example of such inconsistency in the opinions of censors.

Q. They don't have very much work here to do?

A. Not much, excepting the Burmese films and some that my firm imports direct in Rangoon.

Q. Take a place like Bombay where the film inspection already takes at present nearly 3½ hours for five days in the week. Do you think it is possible to get ladies and gentlemen to do that work?

A. There are certain ladies and gentlemen who would love to do honorary work in this direction.

Q. In spite of hot weather, cold weather, rains, etc., working every day, disregarding their social duties?

A. I cannot say much about Bombay.

Q. Do you think all of them will be qualified, although they will offer themselves?

A. In Burma there are enough people who will volunteer their services.

Q. But here they are paid some fees I understand?

A. Yes, they are paid.

Q. They were paying something like Rs. 30 and I understand the Government have now reduced it to Rs. 20?

A. Yes, I know.

Q. Do you know whether the board here actually runs at an annual loss of Rs. 4,000 or Rs. 5,000 which Government have to make up?

A. Naturally because there are not many films here. The income consists mainly of censorship fees, i.e., Rs. 5 per 1,000 feet of film.

Q. So you would have no objection to have two stipendiary censors?

A. I will have no objection to men of education, broad-minded and well paid.

Q. In answer to question No. 35 (a) you say: "The association was ultimately allowed to send a member to the meetings of the board, but without voting power. It was useless to exercise this right without the power to vote and so no representative has ever been sent to the board meetings". First of all, do you think it possible for any representative of the trade to attend a board meeting and vote on his own film or the film of a rival?

A. He could withdraw at the time or he may not attend the meeting when the question of his own film comes up.

Q. Is it not much better to have some person there to represent his views and the views of the association?

A. If we have a representative there and if he votes on a certain line, of course that will have some effect on the other members of the Board, and he will be able, by arguments, to convince the other members.

Q. Is not there likely to be jealousy, say if you represent the association, or Mr. Nariman for instance?

A. I do not believe so.

Q. You are hardly united on every point?

A. As an association we are united.

Q. You don't think there will be any trade jealousy or thinking that one man is letting out trade secrets, or some such thing?

A. We may perhaps take turns.

Q. You told us a good deal about the transaction regarding the transfer of the Globe theatre. Can you tell us what will be the total value of the tickets sold when the house is full?

A. There are two scales of prices; for the early show the prices are low and for the later show they are a bit higher, i.e., we will get about Rs. 800 or Rs. 820 for the late show and Rs. 490 or Rs. 500 for the earlier show.

Q. That is to say, if you are running very successfully, you will get Rs. 1,300 a day?

A. Perhaps more. We have another third show which will bring us about Rs. 490 or Rs. 500.

Q. So it will come to about Rs. 1,800 in all?

A. Yes.

Q. If, by good management, by exhibiting good pictures, the House can be kept reasonably full, do you think Rs. 3,750 will be a reasonable rent for a month?

A. Such incomes are very rare.

Q. Just assuming that the house will be reasonably full, what do you think?

A. I don't think it will be possible.

Q. If a company with considerable resources can afford to cater to first-class patrons and give excellent shows, don't you think it will be able to attract full audience?

A. No.

Q. That seems to be a legitimate possibility?

A. But their experience of their own houses will tell them that it will not be the case.

Q. I want to know whether it will be an economic rent?

A. No: not at all.

Q. If that is so, presumably the company that would pay the rent would realise that in due course?

A. Yes; but from past experience we have to guide our future and our present also.

Q. But are you sure that it is not an economic rent?

A. That of course I can say with certainty. I have one point to submit to you, sir. After I wrote out my statement, I came to know that the duty has been increased. The tariff value of the film has been increased from 4 annas to 4½ annas. That is, we will have to pay Rs. 42-3-0 on 1,000 feet of film.

Chairman: When was that?

A. From the 1st of January.

Mr. Green: Every year the tariff value is fixed under the Act. That is not a very large increase?

A. It will bring it up to Rs. 42-3-0 whereas we have been paying only Rs. 37-8-0. I am objecting to that increase.

Q. You really think that a difference of Rs. 5 will make much difference?

A. It is likely to increase every year; and this increase has been made without any notice or information to us.

Q. These things are always considered by the Chamber of Commerce, and presumably they did not oppose it?

A. But we are not members of the Chamber of Commerce; we are the persons really affected, not the Chamber of Commerce. We import films direct and not through members of the Chamber of Commerce.

Chairman: Anyway, it seems to me that when this Committee is sitting, this ought not to have been done. It is more or less slighting the Committee.

A. Yes; when the Committee is sitting, to enquire into that, that they should increase it or decrease it is not proper.

Chairman: Apart from the merits of it, I look upon it as not at all complimentary to this Committee.

Mr. Green: I think the annual revision of the tariff valuations is regarded as a more or less routine Commerce Department matter. Its effect on our enquiry must have been lost sight of.

Mr. Neogy: I want to ask you about the Government studio. The Government studio, I take it, should be established in the provincial headquarters?

A. Yes, that is my idea.

Q. It will be mainly occupied with the work of producing Government's own films?

A. Yes, that will be its primary duty.

Q. It will be available to the private producers only occasionally?

A. Not exactly so; because a studio may have more than one stage.

Q. How many producing concerns do you think would have the opportunity of working in the studio at the same time?

A. It all depends on what the dimensions of the studio are.

Q. What dimensions would you like the studio to have?

A. If the studio is built on a fairly big scale, many private companies can work there simultaneously. That depends upon the accommodation available.

Q. What will be the approximate cost of the studio, have you thought about it?

A. I have come across an instance, in London I think, where they have built one at a cost of Rs. 4½ lakhs.

Q. If you want to have four producing units working simultaneously there, there should be four sets of apparatus as well as experts there?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you expect the Government to provide different experts for these four separate working units?

A. No; the experts will be consulted only on some technical points. Only one set of technical experts would be provided by the Government.

Q. So the camera man, the director, etc., will have to be provided by the private producers themselves?

A. Yes, that is my idea.

Q. Let us take it that the Government occupies the position of one producing concern and there will be room for three other producing concerns to work simultaneously. What is the number of producing concerns in Burma; about a dozen?

A. Perhaps more.

Q. Therefore there would not be sufficient scope for all the producing concerns to take advantage of the Government studio at the same time?

A. But these producing concerns do not produce films every day. Their capital and their resources are not enough to enable them to produce films or the demand is not such as to keep them busy every day.

Q. But you yourself stated that the demand is likely to increase, and so far as the quality is likely to improve in course of time, the demand also is sure to increase?

A. Yes; but by that time perhaps the people who have already received training and advice from the technical experts may independently start their own studios.

Q. You just now said that it is not merely the lack of the technical advice that stands in the way of the Burman producer but that there is the question of finance also? So far as the technical experts are concerned, they will be benefited by the Government studio, but what about the capital for starting a studio like that?

A. If a Government studio is provided, it will cost about Rs. 4 or Rs. 5 lakhs, but a private producer cannot afford that.

Q. Therefore you look to the private producer also to provide his own producing unit?

A. Not so long as the Government studio exists.

Q. Supposing there are a dozen producing concerns applying for the use of the Government studio. Who is to decide as to who should be given preference, and on what basis would you suggest preference should be regulated?

A. There should be some method. This is a question of administrative details.

Q. Do you expect Government to charge any rent for the use of their studio?

A. Certainly.

Q. Would the rent be uniform or would the studio be let out to the highest bidder?

A. There must be a certain amount fixed for it.

Q. On what basis should the fee be fixed? Would you take into account the Government's outlay, the interest charges, the depreciation, the overhead charges, etc.?

A. No; Government should not look to that.

Q. Therefore, Government should charge less than economic rent?

A. Yes. Government should be prepared to spend more money on encouraging this industry.

Q. Supposing a private concern takes the trouble of having its own studio at its own expense; would not that concern have a legitimate grievance against the Government, because the Government facilities would be available to the other people at a more advantageous rate?

A. That is a matter of the future. So far no one has erected such a studio and so there is no possibility of anybody now coming forward and saying so.

Q. Do you look to the Burman producer to provide his studio and producing outfit?

A. No.

Q. You think they need not at all bother themselves about it?

A. No.

Q. Therefore, you think the facilities in the Government studio should be quite sufficient to satisfy the demands of each and every producer?

A. If there are three or four sets in the Government studio and if other facilities also are given there, yes.

Q. We shall not consider the number of producing concerns for the time being. Supposing there are three or four producing sets, and one will be occupied by the Government always and three will be available to the

private producers; how many feet of film of the average entertainment character would that enable one to turn out?

A. I would put it, on an average, at one film per month for each set.

Q. That is, 36 pictures a year?

A. Yes.

Q. What is the number of pictures that are at present being produced by the Burmese producers, and what is the length? The length is about 8,000 to 10,000 feet; but I believe not so many as 36 are produced.

Q. In course of time don't you think the number will increase?

A. Yes; but that will take some time.

Q. When you say 36, you contemplate that the studio will not be sitting idle at any time; but if the claims of about 20 producing concerns are to be met, do you think your ideal can be achieved?

A. All the pictures may not after all be produced in the studio; and in India most of the scenes can be produced outside the studio.

Chairman: Have you any experience of production?

A. No.

Mr. Neogy: Have you not heard from experts that even the Indian sun and Indian light cannot be depended upon for the best results, and therefore the sunlight should be supplemented by artificial arrangements? Even for out-door pictures, you must have expensive arc light outfit, expert staff, etc. Do you expect the private producer to provide himself with such things?

A. If Government have got any to spare, they can let it out for rent.

Q. Now you expect some experts to be brought out here for the Government studio. How many such experts would you require and on what lines?

A. I think about 3 or 4.

Q. Would you be prepared to have second rate and third rate men?

A. Second rate and third rate men would not do.

Q. What would you deem a proper salary for them?

A. I cannot exactly say. I think a salary of Rs. 2,000 or Rs. 3,000 a month would be fair.

Q. Now you have stated that the exhibitors would not mind exhibiting short length educative films as part of their daily programme. Would you be prepared to pay for such films as may be supplied by Government, or would you expect to be supplied free of cost?

A. We are prepared to pay a reasonable rent provided the films are up to the mark and appeal to the audience.

Oral Evidence of Mg. KYAW ZAN, Advocate, High Court of Judicature at Rangoon, on Saturday, the 21st January 1928.

Chairman: You are a pleader settled in Rangoon?

A. I am an Advocate of the High Court.

Q. You are resident in Rangoon always, I suppose? Do you go to the cinema pretty often?

A. I have been interested in our cinema shows for the last 25 or 26 years.

Q. Production or exhibition?

A. Exhibition.

Q. You import?

A. I did at one time, i.e., during the time of the war. I was virtually running the 'Empire' from 1900 till about 5 years ago when it ceased working.

Q. And how long were you concerned with that?

A. Practically for about 15 or 16 years.

Q. For the last 5 years you have not been concerned with the trade. So your experience is 5 years old?

A. But I have been in touch with some of the Burmese producers.

Q. Do you think the Burmese productions are getting popular?

A. At present there is a craze for Burmese pictures of all kinds, good, had and indifferent.

Q. What do you think that craze is due to?

A. I think it is due to the political transition that is going on in Burma.

Q. You mean political transition accounts for this taste?

A. Yes. You see the Burmans started politics only a few years back and they teach politics in the theatres and everywhere. Everybody talks politics. It has become a habit with them and I think Burmans have advanced by leaps and bounds in politics.

Q. Do you go to the Burmese films often?

A. Yes. The Burmese film industry is in its infancy. There are lots of difficulties and I am trying my level best to give them advice in the matter.

Q. So you continue to be interested in the industry?

A. Yes.

Q. Now what do you think are their requirements,—where the Government can help them?

A. I have consulted a number of these producers and I think we all agree that if, say, 3 Burman lads are sent to England to study the technique by scholarships found by Government, it would improve the industry. A year's course will be quite sufficient.

Q. So that those who are already employed in the industry may be sent to learn better methods? That is your idea?

A. I think so. That is one idea. I think there ought to be a Board or some sort of a place where they would get expert advice.

Q. A studio in which experts are engaged, where they can get expert advice whenever they want and those who want?

A. I think they will want it. The Burmese conception is that we live to learn and we do not learn to live.

Q. You want a Government studio to be employed in producing public propaganda films such as hygiene, public health and various other films. You want the Government studio for that purpose and then the experts to be availed of by private producers for their own purposes? If need be the advice to be given at a nominal price not at a commercial or economic price?

A. Yes.

Q. You think it essential that the Government should do this in order that the industry may thrive on proper lines?

A. Apart from that I should like to see that the Burmans do not get their plots from English pictures. This they are now doing against my advice. We have got legends and we are so akin—Hindus and Buddhists—in our traditions and legends. There are hundreds and thousands of legendary stories from which we can draw plots and our producers do not like to do that.

Q. That is because educated people are not in it?

A. I think so. I think it would be a good thing if our plots and scenarios are placed before the Censorship Board before the pictures are actually taken.

Q. Do you think it would be wise to do so? Don't you think the secret of one producer would be known to the other producer?

A. I think there is no secret among Burmese producers. There is nothing mysterious in these things as in the American serials. I think it would be useful.

Q. Some other witness told us that such advice instead of being beneficial would be harmful?

A. I think it is not so.

Q. Supposing there was a cinema department attached to the Government to develop the industry, to advise on the industry, do you think that would be a better method?

A. That will do equally well.

Q. So that it might take charge of the studio work; it might have an expert giving assistance to this industry and also an advisory body for improving the stories and in other ways.

A. Yes.

Q. A Cinema Department with an advisory body attached to it comprising representative citizens, just like the Board of Industries or something like that?

A. It all depends upon the sort of members you might have.

Q. Anyway that is your idea?

A. Yes.

Q. Is there anything else you want done for the purpose of promoting the industry?

A. We have in Burma now practically 28 or 30 of these producing firms. Out of these there are 4 or 5 firms which are doing well with good strong capital. They always complain that they have not had proper facilities for taking pictures. For instance I find from Cinema magazines that in other parts of the world great facilities are given to these cinema-picture-taking people.

Q. Access to public places?

A. Not only that; public places where privacy also is ensured for these people. Such facilities are not open to the Burmese producers.

Q. You want them to have facilities of access to places of public resort and the loan of public material such as police, military and other things, that is your idea?

A. Yes. We have the Irrawaddy Flotilla Co., who have a monopoly of all inland traffic. They ought to give us facilities for taking pictures that are to be taken inland. The Railways also.

Q. They are to carry troupes and actors at reduced rates of railway fare, I understand that. These are the things you want to advocate?

A. Yes.

Q. Are you satisfied with the moral standard of the western films shown here.

A. Personally I am a man who thinks that every picture is good enough to be shown to anybody in the world for this reason that opinions differ throughout the world. There are some people who are over-sensitive and of very narrow views who may think a picture to be bad and imagine it to be immoral. But it is always possible to look at it from a moral angle of vision.

Q. No effect is produced either on the people or in the opinion of other people?

A. Except that some criminals might copy some of these American methods shown in these serials.

Q. Now you are satisfied with the constitution of the Censorship Board here?

A. It is difficult to get good people to sit on that Board. I myself have been asked to sit more than half a dozen times and I have refused.

Mr. Green: Because you cannot spare the time?

A. That is one reason. But I don't care to sit on it although I am a public man.

Chairman: There is unwillingness on your part?

A. No. You cannot get the best men on it because their time is valuable and they will not be able to come here to do this sort of work. Only two classes of people you get on the Board. People with broad minds who simply sit and pass every film and people with very narrow minds who want to be on the Censor Board simply with a view to cut out what they imagine to be immoral pictures. I think you know what I mean.

Q. What is the remedy you suggest?

A. I would rather have a paid Board of Censors, 2 or 3 of them, who know their work. They may co-opt honorary members.

Q. Even as paid members if you cannot get good men, what is the good of honorary members?

A. It all depends upon the salary that you are going to pay.

Q. You say they might also co-opt honorary members. Can they get them?

A. Yes. For instance here you have got a Board of 3 Censors and a President, the majority and minority of 2 are fighting always against each other. They may in such cases co-opt members and for such purposes you will get people to watch the picture and criticise and say what they like for the time being. You may not be able to get them as members. But for occasional attendance they will surely come.

Col. Crawford: You consider that the exhibition market in Burma affords the Burman producers adequate opportunity of getting a profit on their work?

A. Yes; but subject to certain conditions. The Burmese picture is put on the market. Suddenly, though a bad picture, it becomes rather popular and you will find the audience absolutely choking and you will not find even standing accommodation in these small theatres. A picture like that might cost Rs. 8,000 to Rs. 10,000. Now the yield in the course of a month could be thirty to forty thousand. Whereas I have known of pictures costing 40 or 50 thousand rupees to turn out failures, because they did not attract the masses. That is the reason why I wanted our Burman plots and pictures to be censored before the pictures are really taken. That was one of my reasons.

Q. What amount do you think the best-Burman picture could make from the Burman market?

A. A lakh of rupees.

Q. In America they would spend many many lakhs on a picture?

A. We cannot compare the expenditure incurred here with America or the Continent.

Q. But still I take it that a lakh is not an exorbitant amount to spend on a first class picture? You think the market will not give you more than a lakh or so?

A. We are limited to some extent. That is the one difficulty the expansion of our market. The Burmese picture market can be expanded only by producing pictures fit for universal exhibition. The pictures are made now only for Burma and I have been endeavouring to instil into the producers' minds that this is no good.

Q. You think they should make pictures here so that they may appeal to other countries? Do you think that could be done here?

A. Yes; we have here Japanese pictures, Chinese pictures and so on, so why should not our Burmese pictures have the same patronage.

Chairman: Pictures which can be appreciated by the west with Burmese plots? You think you can deal with them so that you can get a commercial market in the west?

A. Yes with proper plots, proper acting, in a Burmese setting.

Oral Evidence of Mr. C. H. CAMPAGNAC, M.B.E., M.L.C., Bar-at-Law, Rangoon, on Saturday, the 21st January 1928.

Chairman: You are a resident of Rangoon?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you go to the Cinema very frequently?

A. Before the war I used to go to the cinema often but since 1918 I have only been on a few occasions.

Q. Was there any reason for that change?

A. Probably I did not have the time and further I got married.

Q. Since 1918 how many times have you been to the cinema?

A. I have been on a few occasions.

Q. And you go to see the western films?

A. I have been to see Burmese films as well.

Q. A good number?

A. About 3 or 4.

Q. And you would be going to see western films once a month or so?

A. Once or twice a year I think.

Q. And probably you select them because they are special pictures?

A. Yes.

Q. So that you can hardly give us an impression of the nature of the pictures and their outlook?

A. I have seen both good and bad pictures.

Q. Have you any information as to the moral effect produced by the western film in this country?

A. Some of the western films which depict amorous scenes have no doubt a very bad effect upon the young mind. I have noticed this in pictures shown at times when undue hugging and kissing caused young boys to whistle or groan. This was clearly a sign that the pictures were appealing to their sexual and bestial sense. The sounds clearly indicated that.

Q. How often have you seen that?

A. I can't tell you the number of times but it was on a few occasions.

Q. Is it peculiar to Burma? Have you travelled in the West?

A. I was in England for about 14 or 15 years.

Q. Is there much difference between the standard of the films shown there and those shown here?

A. I did not see many pictures in England. They were just starting the cinema halls when I left.

Q. That was long ago?

A. Yes; but the audience did not make the same sounds as they do in Burma.

Q. You think they are more enlightened?

A. I do not think the English crowd make similar noises as those made by the young fellows here.

Q. What you want is that these scenes should be scored out altogether?

A. What I should like is that children under 13 years of age should be excluded from all shows which are not certified for children.

Q. You want the films to be classified?

A. I think the whole programme. As it is, it is really harmful to the children.

Q. You want every day's programme classified? Do you think it is practicable?

A. I think once a week you can have shows at cinema halls which could be certified by the censors as fit for children under 13 years.

Mr. Green: Should this be arranged by the cinema director or the Government?

A. I think the cinema directors would, if you pass a law prohibiting children from going to any show which has not been certified as fit for children.

Chairman: You think it is a practical proposition?

A. I think it is.

Q. Is it essential that it should be done?

A. I think it is.

Q. Especially in view of these sexual things which depict the relations of sexes?

A. I know that a number of parents would like to boycott the shows as they are not sure what the children are going to see. If they knew that the film is fit for children they would be glad to send their children without any fear.

Q. Who are the people that make the noise? It is not the children. It is the boys and girls above 13 and not children under 13? This class between 13 and 18, would you also prohibit them from going to the cinema?

A. I should like to see certain films certified as being fit for children between 14 and 18.

Q. So you are for classifying these films, one set applicable to children under 12 or 13 years of age and the other for adolescents up to the age of 18?

A. Yes.

Q. But you don't mind if adults see these pictures? They may choose for themselves. Is that so?

A. Yes.

Q. But do you think the evil is so great? Don't you think it is better to leave it to the public judgment and growth of public opinion which in turn would reflect on the Producer?

A. I should think that public opinion should be trained that way.

Q. So that you think really that censorship should be stricter so far as films for adolescents and children are concerned in particular?

A. Yes, that is my view.

MANDALAY.

**Oral Evidence of Mr. L. K. MITTER, M.L.C., Assistant Public
Prosecutor, Mandalay, on Tuesday, the 24th January 1928.**

Chairman: Mr. Mitter, you are a resident of Mandalay?

A. Yes, for the last 20 years.

Q. Cinemas started after that?

A. Yes.

Q. How many cinema shows have you got here now?

A. So far as I know, three permanent ones.

Q. Do temporary ones also come up?

A. Yes, sometimes.

Q. Have they any headquarters?

A. They have practically no headquarters, but some have their headquarters at Mandalay, I believe.

Q. Where do they show their pictures in Mandalay?

A. They hire some theatre and show their pictures.

Q. And do these travelling cinemas, move about the whole of the province?

A. They go about the whole of Upper Burma.

Q. During festival seasons, I believe?

A. Yes.

Q. How do they manage? Have they got travelling tents and other equipments?

A. In every important District town, public places are available which can be hired.

Q. Who owns these private theatres or houses?

A. Private owners.

Q. Almost every town of importance has got them?

A. Yes.

Q. In Mandalay all these three cinemas have been in existence for a long time?

A. I believe the Thibaw cinema is the oldest and then there are the Elphinstone and the Globe picture houses.

Q. Have these theatres been in the hands of the same people or have they been changing hands often?

A. Madans are managing the Elphinstone without any change, the Globe Theatres is managing the Globe, while it is only the Thibaw that has changed hands often.

Q. The Thibaw shows only Burmese pictures?

A. Formerly they used to show only Western pictures. But for the last 2 or 3 years they are showing mostly Burmese pictures with few exceptions.

Q. What pictures do the Elphinstone show?

A. They generally show Western pictures. Occasionally they show Indian and Burmese pictures also.

Q. Are the Indian pictures shown at frequent intervals?

A. They show not less than 5 and not more than 10 Indian pictures every year.

Q. I suppose it is not part of their regular programme?

A. They are directed by their management at Calcutta.

Q. And in the Globe theatre, what pictures do they show?

A. They show Burmese and Western Pictures, Burmese predominating.

Q. Do you attend cinemas often?

A. Yes, for the last two years.

Q. Do you live close to the Cinema houses?

A. Yes.

Q. How often do you generally visit these cinemas?

A. Whenever I am at headquarters I go to almost every change of programme. The programmes change twice a week. I generally go to the Elphinstone.

Q. What sort of people go to these Western shows generally?

A. You mean nationality or according to education?

Q. What sort of pictures are generally shown?

A. Serials are not now shown very often. English dramas and small plays are shown generally.

Q. So serials have now become unpopular?

A. I don't know whether they have become unpopular, but they are not generally shown.

Q. Do the children under 14 or 15 go to the Cinemas very often?

A. Yes, they do. They form about 15 per cent. of the audience.

Q. Do you know whether this habit of cinema-going has any effect on children?

A. Yes, they enjoy it.

Q. Are they able to follow these Western films?

A. Yes, those who know English are able to follow them.

Q. Are there many children here under 14 years of age who know English?

A. All boys and girls studying in the Missionary Schools know English very well. I have seen boys under 14 giving lectures as a matter of fact.

Q. Do you think that the films have got any influence on the public either for good or for bad?

A. I should think there is some demoralising effect on the public.

Q. Is the evil confined to any particular community?

A. I don't think so.

Q. The children also get affected that way, I suppose?

A. I don't think children are affected thereby. My remark applies to those who are above 15 or 16 years of age.

Q. Do you think it has a tendency to make them lead irregular lives?

A. Not exactly irregular lives, but I think it has some effect.

Q. How do you judge it, is it guess-work, or an inference from observation?

A. I believe it has some effect on society. Love-making is a thing which is very common in this country and the cinema gives an additional point to it.

Mr. Neogy: By this country you mean Burma?

A. Yes.

Chairman: That is your fear?

A. Not only my fear but what I hear from others as well. My general impression is that the cinema is productive of this tendency among men and women.

Q. What is it then that you object to? Is it merely the scene or the nature of the stories which are evolved?

A. There are certain pictures which catch the imagination of the public eye. There is the dancing, generally speaking, though not exactly nude but nearly of that type, the gestures and the various postures have a bad effect, I suppose, on the public mind. My opinion is that the film-makers purposely make these pictures attractive and sensuous.

Q. You don't object to the dances, I suppose?

A. No, I don't say so.

Q. Then what is your idea? How would you depict it supposing you are the producer?

A. It is a rather difficult point, no doubt. From the producer's point of view it is more to make it attractive.

Q. What can the Censor do in cases like that?

A. I would cut out some portions from the film, portions which could be safely omitted.

Mr. Neogy: Your objection is more to the dress I suppose?

A. Yes.

Chairman: It is more the scanty clothing you object to?

A. Not exactly the scanty clothing. It is the gestures and the postures which are suggestive of something more gross, to which I object.

Q. Therefore you think stricter censorship is needed?

A. Yes, it would be better.

Q. So that is your feeling and that feeling is shared by a large number of people?

A. Yes. As a matter of fact some of the Burmese people have told me that this sort of films should not be seen together by a Burmese father, mother, daughter and other children.

Q. Do the Burmese attend these Western pictures in large numbers?

A. Generally Europeans, Anglo-Indians and other educated classes of Indians and Burmans attend these shows largely.

Q. Do the illiterate classes also visit these Western pictures?

A. Yes, they do too, but the vast majority of them attend Burmese pictures.

Q. So it is more Indians that go to these pictures than Burmans themselves?

A. Very few Burmans go to English pictures, educated and the uneducated alike. That is my impression.

Q. Is it due to national sentiment? We were told at Rangoon that it was due to the national sentiment.

A. I don't think there is any sort of national sentiment at all.

Q. Is there any difficulty in getting Burmese pictures?

A. I have no particular knowledge of that.

Q. Have you seen any objectionable posters or hand-bills?

A. I don't think they could be seriously objected to.

Q. You have not seen any posters or hand-bills of an objectionable character?

A. Although I have seen some which might be classified as objectionable, I don't think they could be seriously objected to. What I mean is, that from a businesslike point of view it could not be objected to, although from an educative point of view one might feel that they need not have been exhibited.

Q. Therefore, you don't think you have seen posters and hand-bills to which reasonable objection could be taken?

A. Yes, that is my point.

Q. Would that remark apply also to the films to which you object?

A. I think so. Things which could be safely omitted should be omitted.

Q. You think then that the evil is not very serious and you would not take any notice of it?

A. Yes, I will take some notice of it.

Q. Do you advise this committee to take notice of it? What steps do you think this Committee should take as regards Western films?

A. I am not in a position to say. I don't know what the scope of the Committee really is.

Q. Do you want the censorship to be made stricter?

A. Yes, I will be content with a little stricter censorship, or rather the power of censorship to be given to local bodies also.

Q. On what ground do you justify that suggestion? Do you think there is much difference between the Calcutta public and the Burmese public and if so, in what respect?

A. In all their social life, habits and manners they differ in every detail. The Burman and Indian communities differ a good deal.

Q. Not in this matter of relationship between the sexes which you have in mind?

A. The first difference that is at once noticed is that the women are much more free here than in India.

Q. Is that a ground for stricter censorship in Burma than in Calcutta?

A. Yes, that is one of the grounds.

Q. You think some of these objectionable pictures give them some more points?

A. I should think so.

Q. Burmese women are more educated and self-reliant, I suppose?

A. Yes.

Q. If that is the case I should have thought that in Burma people are more advanced than in India?

A. Yes.

Q. Can you say that your objection applies to all people, whether Englishmen or Anglo-Indians?

A. No. It applies only to the Burmese and Indian population.

Q. Why do you want a local censorship for Burma? Why are you not satisfied with the Indian? If it should be good in Calcutta it should be good here also except on religious grounds?

A. No. Even on general moral grounds we want stricter censorship in Burma than in Calcutta.

Q. Do you base that on the ground that women are more free here and more educated, and as such, capable of understanding the things in the right way? If that is so your argument should apply also to the Anglo-Indians, since their women are also free and educated.

A. I don't think so, Sir.

Q. Why not?

A. Because their social life is altogether different.

Mr. Neogy: In connection with this last point, is it your meaning that the absence of social restrictions of certain kinds in Burma makes it easier for the people to practise what they see?

A. Yes, that is what I mean.

Q. And from that point of view greater vigilance is needed?

A. Yes.

Q. During your experience, have you observed any increase of crime in these parts, and can you hold the cinema responsible for any such increase?

A. I do not think so. My answer to questions 24(b) and (d) is 'I don't think so.'

Q. In your experience as a public Prosecutor here have you come across any case in which any such defence has been raised that a particular crime was learnt from the cinema?

A. No.

Chairman: You know this man who is under sentence of death now?

A. The name of that famous dacoit is 'Sampey'.

Q. Had you anything to do with that case?

A. I saw part of the brief of that case.

Q. But it was suggested that he learnt the method from the cinema?

A. Yes, but a very small portion of it I believe.

Q. That is the only case in which such a suggestion was made?

A. Yes.

Mr. Neogy: The Indians who care to see the cinema very often prefer the western picture. Supposing the number of western pictures were to be reduced by some means or other and their place were to be taken by the Burmese and Indian pictures, would the Indian audience fall off as a result of this?

A. With regard to the first portion of the question, whenever there is an Indian film exhibited the Indians flock to see that film.

Q. Do they care for Burmese pictures?

A. Not much.

Q. Do the Burmese care for the Indian pictures?

A. Yes. A certain section of the Burmese, viz., the Hindu section will go to see Indian films.

Chairman: Those who are not Buddhists?

A. Yes. Those who follow the Hindu religion.

Q. Are there a considerable number of them?

A. Yes, at Mandalay.

Q. What are they called?

A. Ponas.

Mr. Neogy: Supposing the western pictures were not available at all. Would he go to the cinemas to see Indian pictures because of the habit of going to the cinema?

A. I don't think so.

Q. That is what I was told.

Col. Crawford: As regards the demoralising effect of the films you can give us no definite cases of ordinary crimes as evidence to say that it was due to the cinema?

A. I do not think so.

Q. Your opinion is that some of these western films are not suitable for unmarried girls and young boys and they should not be allowed to see certain films?

A. Yes. Some of these films ought not to be seen by grown-up girls and young boys.

Q. The customs of the English i.e., of the West, and of the Burmans are quite different in regard to sex relationship?

A. Yes.

Q. You criticise the fact that the film exaggerates very often the undesirable sides of the social life.

A. Yes. And unfortunately the ordinary public is not able to appreciate it to the extent it deserves—I mean they are not able to appreciate the desirable portions of the film.

Q. You are afraid that they may be led to adopt the worst forms of western social life?

A. Yes. Western films are too rarely intelligible to the uneducated class. The result is that they form a low opinion of the people.

Q. You think that only those films which are devoid of all evil sides of modern western social life and which appeal to the higher and nobler feelings of humanity would appeal to people here?

A. Yes.

Q. You yourself don't class western civilisation as depreciative because of certain scenes like this?

A. No.

Q. Is it not at the same time a fact that if a drama or a film is not something beyond the normal life it would not appeal to the audience?

A. Yes it is a fact. The normal life is not fit for dramatic portrayal. But it is only the educated that take it in this light.

Q. Now you say that some of those exaggerations of social life are bad and that they can be cut out. Have you any other complaints to make? What about the Indian and Burmese films? Do you as an educated man, go to see Indian films in preference to the western?

A. Not necessarily.

Q. What is your criticism of the Indian produced films? Have you any criticisms to make?

A. I think there should be more films produced in India. Of the films that are produced, they are not up to the standard.

Q. With regard to the story and the whole working out of the story have you any criticisms to make?

A. I should only say that they should be improved.

Q. For my own part I would say that it is not substantially dramatic. Do you think it would improve the Indian film if it is more dramatic?

A. Yes, certainly. The acting now is slow and not incidental.

Q. You consider that is a legitimate criticism?

A. Yes. You asked me whether I have any complaints to make. One serious complaint in all western pictures I find is that whenever Indians come in, they are shown as cowards or something like that.

Q. I think that is possibly the case, due to the ignorance of the producer about India.

A. I do not think it is so.

Q. You fear that it is some definite propaganda against India?

A. It may be that.

Q. Do you think so?

A. From the way in which they are exhibited (whenever I see it it is persistently of the same type), I should think so.

Chairman: Where? How is the Indian shown? Have you seen them here?

A. Yes.

Mr. Neogy: When you say 'Indians', do you mean Orientals generally or Indians alone?

A. I mean Orientals.

Chairman: How are they shown?

A. They are shown as not to be very powerful, they yield when a western man comes in and in such other ways.

Q. Can you tell the names of the films in which you have seen incidents like this?

A. If I refer to the books I can tell you the names of those pictures. I have forgotten them just now.

Mr. Green: You said that there was a certain amount of bad effect from the films. Don't you think one can get some good also by seeing those bad things?

A. Yes, good effects are also produced. Good and bad generally go together.

Written Statement of U BA MAUNG, B.A.S., Assistant Director of Agriculture, Mandalay, dated the 24th January 1928.

INTRODUCTORY.

1. No.

GENERAL.

2. In my experience educated Burmans frequent Cinemas as much as once in a week. The increase on the attendance is very markable and it depends on the popularity of the film shown. My answer refers to Mandalay, Burma.

(b) 90 per cent. Burmans for the Burmese Films and 50 per cent. for the English films.

(c) Very slight.

PART I.

Film Industry in India.

3. In Mandalay Burmese Film of drama with thrills are the most popular with the Burmese audiences.

4. Yes.

5. No. I do not think.

6. Yes.

(b) All will appeal to both the classes.

7. I do not know.

8. Yes, considering the short period of its existence. There is also much scope for improvement.

9. I think so.

10. I do not know.

11. I think so. I have no suggestions to make.

12. We have no amusement Tax here.

13. I do not know.

14. Yes.

15. Yes Burmans have a liking to stage actings and there are many groups of Pwes, Anyein, Zat Yokthay and Yein, all of which can take part in Cinema performances.

16-17. Yes.

18. No.

19. Less expenses here.

20. No.

(b) I have no suggestions to make regarding the sources from which expenditures may be met.

21. Not suitable.

22. I do not know.

23. To a great extent.

PART II.

Social Aspects and Control.

24. No.

(b) No.

(d), (s) I do not know.

25. Yes.

26. (a) Yes.

(b) Life of Buddha.

27-28. No.

29. I am not in favour.

30. No.

31. Yes.

32. I think so.

33. Yes.

(b), (c) Yes.

34. Yes. A central board for Burma is necessary.

(1) Burmese life, customs and habits are quite different from the rest of Indian Provinces.

(2) No.

(3) It should consist of more Burmese elements.

(4) Rangoon.

(b) A Central Board alone in Burma.

(c), (d) I cannot answer.

35 (a), (b) Yes.

36. I have no idea.

37. I do not know.

(b) Yes.

38-40. No.

41. Yes.

42-43. No.

44. To a great extent.

45. No. Registration alone will do.

Oral Evidence of U BA MAUNG, B.A.S., Assistant Director of Agriculture, Northern Circle, Mandalay, on Tuesday, the 24th January 1928.

Chairman: You are the Assistant Director of Agriculture?

A. Yes.

Q. Who is the Director?

A. Mr. A. McKerral.

Q. Are you in charge of Mandalay?

A. Yes. I am Asst. Director of Agriculture of this circle.

Q. Who is above you?

A. Mr. Stock.

Q. Which is his headquarters?

A. Mandalay.

Q. Is he here now?

A. No, he is out on tour.

Q. Do you do any propaganda work in the Agricultural Department here?

A. Yes.

Q. What sort of propaganda? Do you give demonstrations?

A. Yes.

Q. Have you got any experimental farms?

A. Yes, we have got experimental farms and also demonstration fields.

Q. What sort of demonstrations do you give?

A. We give practical demonstrations by means of ploughs, harrows and other agricultural implements.

Q. Has your department ever considered the use of the magic lantern and cinema for propaganda work?

A. We have not only considered it but are taking action towards preparing lantern slides.

Q. Were they prepared in Mandalay?

A. Yes. We have got a separate branch here in Mandalay for photography.

Q. Connected with the Agricultural department?

A. Yes. There is a special officer to deal with photography.

Q. What is his name?

A. Mr. W Ta Yin. He is under the Principal of the Agricultural College and he is in charge of this section.

Q. He is working in this line?

A. Yes.

Q. For how long has that been going on?

A. I believe since two years. We have not so far exhibited any slides. They are in the course of preparation.

Q. Is there now any propaganda by magic lantern slides, say, either in regard to education or public health, etc.?

A. I have not seen any.

Q. Your department is going to do that?

A. Yes.

Q. How much money is spent in that direction?

A. I don't know.

Q. Have you ever thought of using the film for the purpose of propaganda in your department?

A. Yes. We can show scenes of the growing of the crop, ploughing, sowing, watering, harvesting, etc. Any kind of crop can be photographed and shown but it cannot be a long film.

Q. Do you know whether any attempt is being made?

A. We have got slides here and we can use a thousand feet for a film.

Q. Where are you going to do that?

A. Here in Mandalay we are going to do that. There are eight circles in Burma and each circle has to suggest what kind of crop can suitably be taken for film production.

Q. Has any circular been issued to that effect?

A. No circular exactly has been issued, but the Director of Agriculture has asked every circle to send their opinions on this.

Q. Is it with a view to producing films?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you think it will be useful to show them to the people of this country?

A. Yes, it would be very useful. Our Government is really interesting itself in this matter.

Q. Do you see Indian films at all?

A. I have seen two films only.

Q. What do you think of them? Do they appeal to you? You are an educated man.

A. They appeal to me but the action in the films is not up to the mark yet. The movements are slow.

Q. What films were they?

A. I don't remember the names. I saw them in Mandalay.

Q. What took you there?

A. I wanted to see what kinds of films were produced by Burmans and Indians and so I went to see them.

Q. When did you see them?

A. Last year.

Q. Have you seen any Chinese films?

A. I have seen one film.

Q. What do you think of that?

A. I did not like it.

Q. You go to see Burmese films very often?

A. Yes, I go very often. These films appeal to me very much as well as to the uneducated. They are very popular here.

Q. Do they produce any films here in Mandalay? I mean Burmese films.

A. They used to produce here. They had a cinematograph here at Mandalay. The climate seems to be suitable here.

Q. Is there anybody now who is producing films here?

A. There was one company here but that failed.

Q. When was that?

A. Some 4 years or 5 years ago.

Q. How long did they work?

A. I don't know exactly. But I remember they worked for two years. Rangoon people came here and took films.

Mr. Neogy: There were no local productions here in Mandalay, except those of the company which failed?

A. No, I am not aware of anything else.

Q. Do you live in Mandalay?

A. Yes.

Q. Do Burmans go to see the Western films?

A. Yes. Generally educated people only go there. But they may bring with them their people who may not know English and they will translate the English captions into Burmese.

Q. Are these Western films popular with the Burmese?

A. Yes, they are.

Q. What do you think of the Western films?

A. I don't see anything objectionable in them. I consider them to be of educational value also. They improve our knowledge and I consider that they are really useful for us.

Q. I suppose you heard what the last witness said. He seems to think that it has got a bad effect upon the Burmese boys and girls. Do you consider that it has brought about any demoralising effect?

A. Not in the least as far as I am concerned.

Q. You don't share that apprehension?

A. No.

Q. Do you think that there is anything objectionable in the posters and handbills of western films?

A. No.

Q. What about the Burmese films?

A. They are liked by the people.

Q. Did you see the one which was shown last night in the Thibaw?

A. No.

Q. You are satisfied then with the censorship?

A. I consider that they should not be so strict. They must be a little more liberal according to the Burmese ideas and customs.

Q. Are these Burmese films all right?

A. At present there is nothing to complain of except the quality. The quality requires to be improved.

Q. Do you think that the Burmese films should be encouraged to a large extent?

A. Yes.

Q. What do you think should be done in order to encourage the Burmese films?

A. Some financial aid should be given to the producers. A set of newspaper magazines should be brought into existence pointing out the errors of the cinema.

Q. You think the public should be well-informed about the cinema and the newspapers also should be well-informed about the points to criticise?

A. Yes.

Chairman: That must be done by an expert?

A. Yes.

Q. Therefore you want a cinema department, as it were, of Government?

A. No, it should have nothing to do with Government.

Q. But by whom is it to be done?

A. By anybody who can do that.

Q. That is rather a large order. Do you think it will be a paying proposal for any private man to take it up? There are only 8 or 9 producers, of whom only 4 or 5 are prospering here. We want to know what should be done now under the present circumstances.

A. I should say nothing except financial help.

Q. What about students to go abroad and learn the technique?

A. It will be much better.

Q. Is there anything which you wish to add which I have not asked you about?

A. No, Sir.

Mr. Green: When you were talking about a journal, had you in mind a trade journal in which all the news about cinematographs would be published?

A. I am thinking only of that. If such a paper is established, dealing with the cinema, the cinema can be improved.

Q. I think that is a distinctly good idea; but can you make any definite suggestion?

A. I am not in a position to make any definite suggestion.

Q. I take it you have no technical knowledge about the production of films?

A. No, I have not.

Q. Have you seen any of the slides that are being prepared for your department?

A. I have seen some of them.

Q. You think they can be made use of by the agriculturists?

A. Yes.

Q. And if you could get a moving film of the same kind, will not that be much better?

A. Yes, much better.

Col. Crawford: You say that some films are being taken, or are about to be taken, about agricultural processes?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you know who is taking them?

A. We have got a branch of our own which is doing that.

Q. Or have you any private agency?

A. Our idea is to get a short film made by our own branch; beyond that I do not know anything.

Q. You are entirely satisfied with the Burmese entertainment films?

A. Considering the shortness of the period of their existence, I should say I am satisfied.

Q. Is the acting quite good?

A. I am satisfied with that.

Q. Supposing they produce films which won't amuse you, would you go on seeing the western films?

A. Yes. I would go on seeing western pictures if the Burmese films failed to amuse me.

Q. What are the main subjects dealt with by the Burmese films?

A. Ordinary dramas containing some thrills.

Q. Are they sufficiently dramatic to satisfy the public?

A. Yes.

Q. That is what I wanted to know; I have only seen some legendary films myself.

Mr. Neogy: With regard to your suggestion about a journal to deal with technical matters in connection with this industry, would it be a journal conducted in English from a central place for the whole of India including Burma, or do you contemplate a journal in Burmese for Burma alone?

A. I would prefer a Burman journal for Burma. Because the habits and customs of the Burmese here are quite different from those of the Indians.

Q. I was thinking more of the technical side of the production, acting, direction, etc.?

A. There may not be much difference that way, but if the production is to be in Burmese, it would be of no use to India, and so a Burmese journal for Burma alone is necessary.

Q. You have seen some Indian films, I suppose. Indian films are not very popular with the Burmans who do not go to see them in large numbers. Supposing the quality of the Indian films were improved, do you think they would be preferred by the Burmans to the western films?

A. If the Indian films are equal to the western films from the technical point of view, of course the cinema-goers will go to them just as they go to the western films.

Q. That is, they will like both equally?

A. Yes; the question will be, which is the better one.

Q. You said you don't like the Chinese films. What is it exactly that you don't like in them?

A. From the films I have seen, I found that the acting was not even as good as the Burmese films.

Oral Evidence of Mr. G. TRANTER, Police Supply Officer, Mandalay West, on Tuesday, the 24th January 1928.

Chairman: You are the Inspector of Supplies?

A. Yes.

Q. Of what?

A. Of stores, etc., to the police.

Q. How long have you been in that post?

A. For two years now.

Q. Have you been resident in Mandalay for two years?

A. I came here only two years ago.

Q. All that time you have been on this duty?

A. Previously I was in the District Police.

Q. Can you tell us whether there are any travelling cinemas going about the country?

A. Practically none.

Q. I suppose you go to the cinemas pretty often?

A. I go frequently.

Q. Do you see any Burman or Chinese films at all?

A. None.

Q. You see the Western films?

A. Western films only.

Q. Do they show in the Elphinstone any Indian or Burman films?

A. They have shown only one Indian film in Mandalay and that was last week.

Q. That was the first occasion, to your knowledge, on which they showed an Indian film?

A. Yes.

Q. What do you think of the Western films shown here? Have they any tendency to teach crime or criminal methods?

A. I think so.

Q. You think there is any increase of crime due to the cinema?

A. I should think it shows better methods to the criminal, and there may be an increase due to that.

Q. You have nothing to do with the investigation of crimes?

A. Not at present.

Q. But when you were in the District Police?

A. I had crime work.

Q. When you were in the police, did you come across any case which you could distinctly trace to cinema influence?

A. No.

Q. Does the cinema spread knowledge?

A. Yes.

Q. Can you prevent the spread of knowledge; do you think it will be useful to prevent it? Just as people take to motor cars to enable them to go quickly, then can also get knowledge from the cinema?

A. I think there are too many crook films shown; that is the whole difficulty.

Q. You have in mind such educative things as triumph of virtue over vice?

A. Yes, they have a moral lesson.

Q. They are also perhaps of great use to the detective?

A. It may be so.

Q. There is positive good in it and a possibility of evil?

A. Yes, I agree.

Q. Just as for instance a knowledge of Chemistry would enable people to commit crime or the use of the 'phone, i.e., misleading people on the 'phone; can you stop the 'phone on that account?

A. Of course, we cannot.

Q. Whatever possibility of evil there is, I suppose, is inevitable in these cases?

A. Yes, inevitable.

Q. What do you think of the effect of the cinema on the moral side? Do you really think the western films shown here have any demoralising effect on any class of people?

- A. I should say yes. I think some of the films go to extremes.
- Q. You mean they will be objectionable either here or in England?
- A. Objectionable, because they are not true to life.
- Q. When you depict the under-world life, for instance, you have to be true to that life?
- A. It is not necessary that such things should be shown.
- Q. You may not, of course, like to see the under-world films; but where a man chooses to depict the under-world life, he must be true to that life?
- A. Yes.
- Q. I suppose you recognise that the film has an entertainment value and not only an educative or a moralising value?
- A. I think it may have a moralising value, not an educational value at all.
- Q. You go there only for amusement?
- A. Yes, for amusement.
- Q. You want to get amusement and get excitement and pleasure?
- A. Yes, that is a fact.
- Q. Then there must be some exaggeration?
- A. Yes, in order to please the audience. If they do not exaggerate, they won't get the audience.
- Q. Do you think a stricter censorship is likely to affect the clientele?
- A. Yes, it may affect it.
- Q. And it may affect the trade also?
- A. I think it would affect the trade.
- Q. Which would you prefer?
- A. I think it is better to leave things as they are.
- Q. And not to interfere with it, lest the trade is killed?
- A. Yes.
- Q. Do you think the cinema trade is at all flourishing here?
- A. Yes, I think it is flourishing.
- Q. Do you think the exhibition side pays them?
- A. Yes, it pays them well.
- Q. We saw a show at Maymyo with hardly 20 people attending it, and there were two films shown there?
- A. One of them does not pay at all, while in the other the western film pays them very well.
- Q. What is the population of Mandalay, do you know?
- A. I think Mr. Ahmed Khan must know it better.
- Q. Have you seen posters and hand-bills in connection with these cinemas?
- A. Yes.
- Q. Have you found anything objectionable in them?
- A. Nothing.
- Q. In your two years' experience, you have found nothing objectionable?
- A. I frequently see the shows and I have never found anything objectionable.
- Q. Did you come across the Social Hygiene Delegation which came here last year?
- A. No.
- Q. Apparently Mandalay has been their field for getting what would be thought objectionable posters and advertisements. You have not come across anything like that?
- A. I have not come across anything objectionable so far.
- Q. Do you know of any headmaster or educationist here who was in touch with Mrs. Neville Rolfe?

- A. There is one, Rev. Walters of the Wesley Mission.
- Q. Was he in Europe recently?
- A. Yes; he came back only a few months ago.
- Q. Is Rev. Shepherd of the same Mission?
- A. Yes.
- Q. The only gentleman from here who was in England recently, is Mr. Walters?
- A. Yes; he just came here a few months ago.
- Q. It was reported in November that he was away in England or Scotland?
- A. Yes, he might have been.
- Q. So on the whole I may take it that your view is that although there is a possibility of some danger or evil, still it is better to leave things as they are?
- A. Yes; because we have a board of censors in Rangoon.
- Q. And if there is anything objectionable, it is taken care of by the censorship board?
- A. Yes.
- Colonel Crawford: Are you a married man?
- A. Yes.
- Q. Has your wife or anybody else been complaining about these things in any way?
- A. No.

***Oral Evidence of Mr. AHMED KHAN, C. I. D. Inspector, Mandalay, on Tuesday, the 24th January 1923.**

- Chairman: You come from Northern India?
- A. I come from the Central Punjab.
- Q. I suppose your service was begun in Burma?
- A. Yes, I have 23 years' service now.
- Q. How long have you been in Mandalay?
- A. For the past six years.
- Q. Do you go to the cinema in the course of your duty?
- A. I go frequently.
- Q. Are you told off to do that?
- A. Yes, it is part of my duty.
- Q. You visit the cinemas?
- A. Yes.
- Q. Your predecessor also was doing that, I think?
- A. Yes.
- Q. For what purpose do you go there?
- A. To see the show as well as to watch the pick-pockets, etc.
- Q. In connection with the show, what are you told to look out for?
- A. If I find anything objectionable, I am supposed to report, i.e., anything obscene.
- Q. Had you any occasion so far to make such a report?
- A. No, Sir.
- Q. During the last six years?
- A. No.
- Q. Have you had any instructions to know what should be considered objectionable?
- A. There are no general instructions.

- Q. It is left to your judgment?
- A. Yes.
- Q. You have to find out and judge for yourself whether there is anything really objectionable?
- A. Yes.
- Q. You have found nothing?
- A. No.
- Q. How do you make up your mind?
- A. If any religious show or any act is shown which would offend the feelings of a community, I would make a report about it. Or if some naked pictures are shown which the people won't like to see, I would also report.
- Q. When you say naked pictures, I suppose, you mean relations between the two sexes, kissing, hugging, embracing and such things?
- A. No.
- Q. Then you don't see anything objectionable in them?
- A. No.
- Q. When you attend the show, I suppose you sit with the audience?
- A. Yes, Sir.
- Q. Or do you go to the reserved seats?
- A. No. I generally go to the second or the third class.
- Q. The eight anna or the four anna class?
- A. One rupee or Rs. 2 class.
- Q. One rupee and two rupees classes are occupied only by a very few people?
- A. If the picture is good, those classes will be occupied.
- Q. Anyway, you are able to judge of the audience?
- A. Yes, Sir.
- Q. Do you think there is any bad effect created by the western films on the people?
- A. No, I do not think so.
- Q. Either on the young or the old?
- A. Bad on nobody except on bad chaps.
- Q. Just as when cigarettes are exposed, those who want to smoke take to them, so also those who are inclined towards bad tendencies, take the cinema in a bad light?
- A. Yes.
- Q. You don't think people are spoiled by the cinema?
- A. No.
- Q. You think it is popular with the people?
- A. Yes.
- Q. You go and see the Burmese films?
- A. I go to the Burmese films, the Chinese films and the Indian films.
- Q. But the Chinese films are shown more often?
- A. Not very often. They have been shown only three times in the Globe. Sometimes in the Elphinstone also they have been shown.
- Q. Are Indian films shown frequently?
- A. They are also occasionally shown.
- Q. Are they popular with the Burmese?
- A. The Indian films are more popular with the Indians as the Burmese films are more popular with the Burmans.
- Q. Western films?
- A. Are popular with all.

- Q. Do women go in large numbers to the theatres?
- A. No, they go in small numbers. They do not go unless the film is religious.
- Q. Do the Burmese women go to the western social dramas?
- A. Yes, they go.
- Q. Are they in a position to understand and follow the western films?
- A. Yes, they understand.
- Q. They are not likely to misunderstand them?
- A. No.
- Q. So on the whole you are satisfied that there is nothing calling for a remedy?
- A. I am satisfied.
- Q. Either on the ground of crime or on the ground of demoralising effect, you are satisfied there is nothing calling for any remedy?
- A. Indian and Burman films generally show superstitious things.
- Q. You mean super-natural things?
- A. Yes.
- Q. Of course on an educated man like you, they have no effect? But the people like it I suppose?
- A. Yes.
- Q. They are according to their traditions?
- A. Yes.
- Q. Not that you object to them?
- A. No, I don't object.
- Q. Is there a large Mussalman population here?
- A. Yes; there is a good Muhammadan population.
- Q. You have not seen any film which would hurt the feelings of any community?
- A. I have not seen any.
- Q. You had no occasion to report on that ground?
- A. No.
- Q. Are you assisted in your work by anybody else, or do you do the work single-handed?
- A. There are many assistants who also go to the cinema and report to me.
- Q. They report to you?
- A. Yes; and I make my report to the D. S. P.
- Q. You have not heard of your assistants making any complaints during the last six years?
- A. No.
- Q. Have you seen posters?
- A. Yes.
- Q. There is nothing objectionable in them?
- A. Nothing.
- Mr. Neogy: Is the change of programme in every theatre notified to you?
- A. Yes.
- Q. Every theatre informs you when they are going to show a new picture?
- A. They do not exactly inform me; but I get the posters for nearly every change of show.
- Q. And you make it a point to attend every change of programme?
- A. Yes.
- Q. Do you go through the whole length of the film, as a rule?
- A. Yes; sometimes partly.

Q. If you are required to satisfy yourself about the whole length of the film before it can be allowed to be shown, what happens to those films which are seen only partly by you?

A. Some of my assistants will be there to report to me if they see anything objectionable.

Q. Is an officer always on duty at each theatre?

A. Yes.

Mr. Green: Do you see the censor's certificate?

A. Yes.

Q. The actual certificate of the thing that is shown on the screen?

A. They cut out one part and send it over to our head office.

Q. Apart from the film?

A. Yes, a small bit of it.

Mr. Neogy: When do they send that part to the head office?

A. Before it is sent to the trade.

***Oral Evidence of U BA PE, Manager of the Globe Theatre, Mandalay, on Tuesday, the 24th January 1928.**

Chairman: You are managing the Globe Theatre here?

A. Yes.

Q. How long have you been managing this theatre?

A. For the last 10 years.

Q. Does that theatre belong to the Globe Theatre, Ltd.?

A. Now it is under the management of the Globe Company. Formerly it was owned by me.

Q. Now it is a rented building, I suppose?

A. Yes.

Q. You are now the Manager of the Globe here?

A. Yes, for the last 5 years.

Q. Were you connected with the production of pictures?

A. Practically speaking, I am not connected with the production of pictures, but I have had chances of knowing what it is, the difficulties which they have to surmount, etc.

Q. Are there any producing agencies in Mandalay itself?

A. There were two or three before but they are defunct now.

Q. Could you tell us when did they start and when did they die?

A. One of them was started in 1918 under the name of National Films Company and after producing two pictures they failed. Six months later another came into existence by the name of Slida Company and this produced one picture and failed and another film company produced two pictures and failed.

Q. How many years is it now that they have altogether ceased to exist in Mandalay?

A. It is now nearly 2 years that there are no producing companies in this town.

Q. Could you explain why all these producing concerns failed altogether? Was it due to want of business talents, knowledge or the technique of the art?

A. It was due to the want of both business knowledge and the technique of the art.

Q. What about the financial position?

A. The financial position was also unsound. Not only in Mandalay but in Rangoon also the business is not thriving. Some young men who have some money venture out on this business, not from the business point of view but for the mere pleasure of it.

Q. How do they derive pleasure?

A. By beginning a new hobby. It is a sort of diversion to them to go to the Districts in connection with the work. They don't realise it themselves until they have lost ten or twenty thousand rupees and when they realise their loss at last they find it too late to mend. What I want to say is that they have no business talents to pursue and to do the business in the correct manner possible.

Q. What is to be done then?

A. The Burmese pictures are very popular but at the same time they are waning in influence. We have not got any uniformity in standard in the production of these films. Out of the 23 and odd producing companies in Rangoon there are only two companies there which produce very good pictures. And these two concerns find it impossible to cope with the demand and naturally the other producers suffer enormously. For example, one of the films produced by a big company in Rangoon was shown here in Mandalay for more than 3 weeks and throughout we had very packed houses. When once the picture was taken away business began to fall. There is a world of difference between the productions of these two first class producing concerns and other so-called producers in Rangoon. There is absolutely no uniformity in standard. For example, we find the Universal Pictures Corporation, Pathe and other producing concerns of the West: though their productions are of different quality they are of uniform standard throughout. But in Burma, excepting for the two first-class producing companies in Rangoon, all the others are very bad and hence the difficulty.

Q. You exhibit both Burmese and Western films?

A. Yes, both.

Q. How often do you include Burmese pictures in your programme?

A. We show Burmese pictures about once in two months. We run these Burmese pictures for a week at a stretch.

Q. And sometimes you show Chinese pictures also?

A. Yes, but very seldom.

Q. Especially on Chinese religious days, I think, e.g., you showed a Chinese picture yesterday (which we visited) because of the Chinese New Year.

A. Yes, that is so.

Q. But I see the audience was not large. There were only 255 people and only about 280 people paid for their entrance?

A. We have only about 1,500 Chinese people in this town. When we exhibit Chinese films only Chinese attend these shows. Burmans don't generally attend them.

Q. Burmans care more for the Burmese films, I suppose?

A. Yes, in a way, but there is a tendency now to see Western pictures. As people get more educated they care more for the Western films. When ever very good Burmese pictures are shown they come in large numbers but generally they prefer Western pictures.

Q. Which is more paying to you, to exhibit Western pictures or Burmese pictures?

A. Unless they are very good Burmese pictures don't pay.

Q. Who are your chief patrons, Burmese or others?

A. Burmese are our chief patrons. So few Anglo-Indians and Europeans and some educated Indians also attend these shows.

Q. Even when Western films are shown?

A. Yes, that is so.

Q. I suppose that is because your house is a little far away. Most of these Europeans and Anglo-Indians visit the Elphinstone, I believe?

A. Yes.

Q. So your chief patrons are Burmans and unless you exhibit very good Burmese pictures you don't get good Burmese audience for Burmese pictures?

A. Yes, that is so.

Q. You told me last night that you were going to recommend to your management to drop showing Burmese films at the Globe in Mandalay. Do you think you do well in so doing when Burmans form the bulk of your audience?

A. We have now besides our house, the Thibaw picture house which shows mainly Burmese pictures. As things stand at present, there is an unhealthy competition between us when we both show Burmese pictures, to the detriment of both. As it is, I think we could get on well with the Western films. The Thibaw cannot get good Western films. Only Madans and the Globe can get Western films.

Q. So you think one Burmese house would be enough for Mandalay?

A. Yes, I think so.

Q. You said two companies produce very good films in Rangoon. Are they able to supply easily?

A. They are not able to cope with all the demand and naturally the exhibitors suffer.

Q. Are these second and third rate films available in large numbers?

A. Some are available but even then we are running at a loss.

Q. You are showing Western as well as Burmese Pictures at present, and you think Western pictures pay you better on the average?

A. Yes.

Q. What sort of Western pictures are popular with the people here?

A. We show the United Artistes pictures, generally. I mean feature films. Serials have ceased to be popular for the last two years. People generally like feature films now, having cultivated the taste.

Q. Those Burmans who used to go in for serials now, go in for Burmese films, I suppose?

A. Yes, some of them have taken to Burmese films.

Q. The more educated people prefer feature films?

A. Yes, that is so.

Q. Where the social life of the West is depicted more?

A. Yes.

Q. What is your impression of the nature of the Western films coming out into this country?

A. It is quite alright. I don't find any fault in them.

Q. You have heard of the complaint of the National Council of Women against these pictures?

A. I don't think there is any foundation for their protests. The Burmese would really object to kissing in their own pictures, but they enjoy it on their finding it in the Western pictures.

Q. I suppose they attach the true significance to scenes they see in the cinema shows?

A. Yes, they do, so far as Burmese pictures are concerned.

Q. And you don't think there is any harm done to boys and girls of impressionable age when they see these Western pictures?

A. I don't think so.

Q. Supposing there is a stricter censorship in these feature films, do you think that will affect the number of people going to the cinemas?

A. Certainly, it will affect the trade. Kissing scenes are not introduced for nothing in these films. They are part of the story themselves and if those scenes are cut off that will have a very bad effect upon the audience. In fact the film will lose significance.

Q. Now and then the censors do cut off such scenes, do they not?

A. No, they don't cut off kissing scenes.

Q. Had you anything to do with the censorship yourself?

A. Yes, I know something about the censorship. Now in Burma, we have got the Commissioner of Police acting as President of the Board of the Censor Committee and there are other members on the Board. I don't think that place should be taken away from him. We should have a very highly qualified President and a committee to be assisted by Provincial boards and this censor should be empowered to act as best he can. I am for having one well qualified censor, a highly paid officer to be assisted by a number of people.

Q. That is the sort of institution you want? A good paid censor assisted by an Advisory Board, would be more satisfactory, you think?

A. Yes, that is my point.

Q. But do you think one man's judgment is enough to rely upon in a matter like that?

A. I think in every business, in spite of all that may be said to the contrary, I think, it is all governed by one man. It is all one man's show. I am talking from a practical point of view and not from the theoretical point of view.

Q. What do you think of the association of women on the Censorship Board?

A. Well, I think if they are included it will mean further hardship to the trade.

Q. They will be too strict you think?

A. I want to make myself quite clear. I might make it quite clear at the outset that I am speaking for myself and not as a representative of the Globe Theatre. I know of an incident which happened in Rangoon some two years before the picture "Life of Buddha" was screened. In the case of another Burman produced film, so far as I could see, there was but one solitary scene which could be interpreted as objectionable but the lady went and objected to several scenes with the result that the other censors agreeing with her the film was torn to pieces. The result was, the story lost its whole significance. After all I am only impressing the point that the opinion of the lady prevailed.

Q. That is quite natural. The other members, perhaps, thought that they should not wound the sentiments of the lady member on the board?

A. Yes, Sir, it is for that reason that I am not in favour of having lady members on the board.

Q. So it was "tit for tat," was it?

A. I don't know that, but that was what happened.

Q. At any rate you are of opinion that there should not be too many women on the Board?

A. It will spoil the whole thing.

Q. You think they are apt to exaggerate matters and would view things from a puritanical point of view?

A. I should think so.

Q. I suppose you are a member of the local Legislative Council?

A. I was a member but am not a member now.

Q. Do you think these Burmese films will be liked by Europeans and Anglo-Indians?

A. I doubt it very much. Educated people always prefer to go to the best pictures. We cannot expect to come up to the Western standard.

matters stand at present. Burman films won't have a commercial value outside Burma.

Q. So that any participation in the Imperial Preference scheme will not benefit Burma?

A. If we take topical scenes of Burma there will be a good demand for them outside Burma. In fact I have read the evidence tendered by the representatives of the Producers' Association before this Committee at Rangoon. I think Government should open a theatre of its own at Rangoon for the use of Burman producers for exhibition of Burman films at fixed rates of rent. I am sure Government will not suffer. It will be a sound business investment.

Q. People will complain that Government is making unfair competition. Why do not private persons do the same?

A. At present all investments in Burma are calculated on the interest basis. The present rate of interest is about Re. 1-8 or Rs. 2. Government have already lost much by financing losing concerns. I hold that this will be a sound business proposition and private producers will not have to pay high rents at all. At present these producers have to pay very high rentals at Rangoon which they could very well save to the benefit of the mofussil picture houses if they could get the Government theatre.

Q. There are already two theatres in Rangoon which show Burman pictures now and you yourself say that they attract very little?

A. Well, Sir, as you would have seen in Rangoon, the London Art pictures and the British Burma pictures are very good indeed and these pictures work on the percentage basis in Rangoon which means they are unable to save much at present. So, naturally they will have to charge much more when these films are sent out to the mofussil. If you see "The Queen" you will find the pictures shown there are all on fixed rent basis. I know, as a matter of fact, the mofussil cinemas in places like Sagaing, Shwebo, Monywa, suffer most for want of good Burmese pictures and they find it impossible to pay for these costly productions in Burma.

Q. What do you think of Government starting a producing studio in order to promote propaganda films, agriculture, education, public health and other pictures? These Government studios will have specially trained photographic and directing experts also?

A. I think that will improve very much the technique and method of production.

Q. So you think that if the services of these expert assistants are lent on moderate terms to private producers it will improve production?

A. Yes, I think so.

Q. And do you think that those who are already in the line should be given scholarships to go abroad and study the art and technique?

A. That is the only solution that I could think of.

Q. And you, as a public man, would advocate that course?

A. Yes, I think so.

Q. Do you think it will be a popular measure?

A. Certainly. We have already got a State Scholarship Board in Burma. When I was a member of the Legislative Council of Burma I moved a resolution which was passed and became law that a State Scholarship board should be formed. When I moved the resolution I had in mind the idea of sending young men abroad also for studying this art. We have now about 12 scholarships in Burma and I want at least one or two of them to be earmarked for sending our scholars abroad for the promotion of the cinema industry.

Q. Don't you think that objection might be taken to this proposal?

A. Why should any objection be taken? Whatever the opinions of others may be, all will agree that the cinema is the only form of amusement which people enjoy and it also acts as an educative factor and should be encouraged.

Q. And also acts as an educative factor?

A. Yes.

Q. And therefore you think it should be encouraged?

A. Yes.

Q. You think the population in Burma will support such a scheme?

A. Not every one. But the bulk of the population will support it. At least the younger generation will welcome it. The older people might have some objection to it as affecting the religion. The result is that these old people in whose hands the wealth really lies will not go in for this trade.

Q. Though they come to know that it would be a profitable concern?

A. Yes. Though they know that would be a profitable concern they won't spend money in this direction. In fact that is the reason why we are not able to encourage this industry.

Mr. Neogy: You never exhibit Indian films?

A. I have exhibited them once or twice.

Q. Whose production was it?

A. Heno(?).

Q. Was it a social drama?

A. No. We have not showed any social drama. They want religious dramas.

Q. Do the Burmans come to see the Indian pictures?

A. Not at all.

Q. On what terms do you get these Indian pictures?

A. On a 50 per cent. basis.

Q. On what terms do you get the Burman pictures?

A. It depends upon the quality of the pictures.

Q. Let us take the best.

A. We get 25 per cent. and 75 per cent. goes to the producer.

Q. What about the expenses for advertisement?

A. The producer pays.

Q. Music?

A. That depends upon how the picture is favoured. If it is a favourite picture we don't pay for it.

Q. What about the London Art pictures?

A. For the best picture the producer pays for the music and I get 25 per cent. In the case of average Burmese pictures 55 per cent. is paid to the producer and we keep 45 per cent.

Q. Out of your share you pay the expenses?

A. Yes.

Q. What about the Chinese pictures? What do you pay for them?

A. We work them on a 50 per cent. basis.

Q. Who pays for the music and advertisement?

A. We pay for the music and handbills are supplied.

Colonel Crawford: I have been very interested in what you said. You said that the Burmese pictures were waning in popularity owing to the fact that there was a very large number of other good productions and that this has affected the receipts even of the 2 good producing companies. Do you consider them as up to the quality of the West?

A. No. They are not.

Q. What amount of money can a good Burmese picture draw out of Burma? Can you tell me the maximum return that a good picture could get?

A. The income that we have been getting at present is about 30 to 40 thousand.

Q. In what length of time?

A. In about a year. But if one and the same man is able to run the company both as an exhibitor and producer he can expect something more. These two are separate businesses. Exhibiting is a business and if we know how to produce a film that is really another business. Also there are a lot of pictures with us which have not been sent to the districts. If they can be exhibited in the districts we can certainly get some more money.

Q. On the whole you don't visualise more than a lakh of rupees on a picture?

A. No.

Q. Supposing the quality of the London Art picture stays as it is to-day when he spends 15 to 20 thousand rupees. In that case there is the possibility that his pictures also will be waning in popularity after some time?

A. Yes. There is that possibility.

Q. If he wants to improve the quality of his pictures he has to spend much more money?

A. Yes.

Q. Once he begins to do that, as the market is at present, he cannot get a return from the public to enable him to spend sufficient money on his production?

A. That is really a difficulty.

Q. If you are going to assist him in getting better quality pictures is it not a fact that he requires a bigger market?

A. Yes.

Q. You say that Burmese pictures have no appeal abroad?

A. No. They do not appeal. There is no universal appeal. Talking of Burman legendary pictures, they would not appeal to others.

Q. Is it possible for a Burmese Company to produce a story that might have a universal appeal?

A. I don't think so.

Q. Why? You have got in London stories of Europeans in other parts of the world. For example, the story of a European on the West coast of Africa which made a very good appeal to the London audience. So also you can get stories from Burma of some Europeans.

A. We have not got enough of such stories to be continually producing pictures of that sort. It is just possible we may have 3 or 4 stories like that.

Q. Supposing he produced one such picture. It would bring him the cost and also it would appeal to the universal market. The returns he got from that picture might assist him to produce further pictures.

A. As I have already said there are not enough pictures to be going on like that. We may produce 3 or 4 pictures. That will be very popular.

Q. Are you convinced that a good Burman story produced with care will fail to appeal to the West?

A. I don't think it will appeal.

Q. The present stories would not. They would have to be treated in a different manner. If better stories were produced?

A. In the first place we would not have enough stories. In the second place even if we have, the first 2 or 3 pictures will pass on well. Then it will be of no use and it will have to be dropped.

Mr. Neogy: You say the novelty will be gone after that?

A. Yes.

Colonel Crawford: Do you mean to say that no hope can be entertained of Burmese pictures finding a market in the western countries? You have got here some western actors. With those actors and some other actresses can you not produce and set down for the western market an entirely western story?

A. We see western stories coming into the market as well as stories from here. Do you expect a Burmese picture could compete with those pictures? I don't think it could.

Q. For example, Lancashire produces cotton materials for Burma and India. Burma also produces. In the same way there is nothing to prevent your producing pictures here. You have good scenery.

A. It is a very hard process, Sir.

Q. It is difficult I admit. As you are stuck, it appears to me that the fact is, from your Burma market the producer can only hope to get a certain amount of money. And yet he cannot hope to retain popularity unless he spends more money. He has got to try something else? Am I right?

A. Yes.

Q. Also he cannot look to the international market to support him?

A. I do not think there is any possibility of that.

Q. In that case it looks a very gloomy aspect if our surmise is correct. Am I correct in understanding that there is a different standard of censorship for Western and Burmese films?

A. Yes.

Q. Somebody in Rangoon gave me the idea that a Burman producer, even if he wanted to produce a kissing scene, the censors would not allow him. It is now said that it would be better to have such scenes. Will the public make any objection to this?

A. Burmese will object to a kissing scene in a Burmese picture but they would not object to having such a scene in a western picture.

Q. If a Burmese producer were to introduce a kissing scene the censors would not allow him to do it?

A. No. That is a different standard.

Q. Am I right in thinking that you have to give vulgar jokes in these Pwés. Is it not quite possible that you might have to give these in the film as an entertainment?

A. These vulgar jokes and kissing scenes are quite different.

Q. Are such jokes popular with the audience?

A. There was a time when they were very popular. But now with the advancement of education I think those jokes are dropping out. About these jokes they are very strict now.

Mr. Green: Can you tell me approximately the population of this place?

A. One lakh.

Q. How many of these are Burmans?

A. I do not know. But the majority of the population is Burmese and Indians.

Q. Do you know how many Chinese there are in Mandalay?

A. About 15,000 Chinese in Mandalay.

Chairman: I notice there is a tendency in the theatres at Mandalay to put on different kinds of films in succession. First Western films, then, possibly, Indian films, then Chinese films, and so on?

A. Yes.

Q. That is simply to attract different types of people?

A. Yes.

Q. You cannot run a theatre with a purely European audience?

A. No. There are very few Europeans here.

Q. Do the cinemas in other cities in Burma also do the same thing?

A. No, Sir. Upper Burma is chiefly concerned with Burmese and the cinema houses in those parts generally show Burman pictures, because they are the people who patronise the shows. They may not be able to under-

stand Western, Indian and Chinese pictures. Burmese pictures they can very well understand.

Q. Thank you very much. We had very interesting information from you.

Oral Evidence of Mr. IYER, Proprietor of Thibaw Cinema at Mandalay, on Tuesday, the 24th January 1928.

Chairman: You are the exhibitor I suppose in the Thibaw cinema?

A. Yes.

Q. You are not the proprietor of that hall?

A. I am the proprietor only for the Bioscope film machines.

Q. The building belongs to somebody else?

A. Yes. The building belongs to somebody else and a Burmese lady has taken the lease. I am a tenant.

Q. Are you connected only with the exhibition side?

A. Yes.

Q. For how long?

A. From 1912.

Q. Have you been in the same place?

A. For about one and-a-half years I was just opposite to the Elphinstone Bioscope. After 18 months I shifted from that place and came to this side, China Street. From 1915, we have been in the same place.

Q. You are now confining your exhibition only to the Burmese films?

A. Yes.

Q. Since when?

A. For the past 4 years.

Q. Before that what were you doing? Were you showing English and Indian pictures?

A. Sometimes we showed Indian pictures, but the bulk of our programme was made up of western pictures. Then Madans came and competed. Now in the matter of exhibiting western films I cannot compete with Madans. He has now got the monopoly.

Q. What about the other companies? Universal?

A. They do not appeal here.

Q. Pathe, etc.?

A. I cannot compete with them. Their prices are more.

Q. You find the Burmese pictures more paying?

A. They are not more paying. Since I have not at present got sound business I am pulling on with it, without sustaining loss.

Q. Did you try them?

A. Yes, I tried but it was a loss. So I changed to Burmese pictures.

Q. Do you show Indian pictures?

A. Sometimes I do show Indian pictures too.

Q. Who are your chief patrons?

A. Burmese.

Q. Do they come to see Indian pictures?

A. Very few and very seldom.

Q. That is why you don't show Indian pictures often?

A. Yes.

Q. What is the total approximate Indian population here?

A. Including the Telugu people, Hindustani-speaking people and Muhammadans, etc., there are about 3,000 to 3,500.

Q. When you show Indian pictures, what kind of pictures do you prefer? Bombay pictures or Bengali pictures?

A. I have shown pictures of the Kohinoor Film Company of Bombay. I found it a success for the first two days. I cannot repeat Indian pictures for more than 2 or 3 days.

Q. Last week you showed "Krishna Naradhi," I suppose?

A. No, Sir, Elphinstone showed it.

Q. You have not shown any Indian pictures lately?

A. No. I showed a picture on the 14th January.

Q. I see on the 14th January you had an audience of nearly 140 people.

A. Yes. For all the three shows put together.

Q. What picture was it?

A. That was also a Burmese picture.

Q. You generally get about 400 people for each show on an average.

A. Not exactly so. Sometimes I show each picture for one week. So the number drops off. I can say I am getting an audience of 300 for a day with 2 shows on an average.

Q. Most of whom are in the 3rd or 4th class? i.e., in 4 annas and 8 annas seats?

A. Yes. The bulk of them come only in the 3rd and 4th class.

Q. Very few people come in the 1st class and Re. 1 seats?

A. Yes.

Q. You find it a paying concern?

A. I am just covering my expenses.

Q. Why? There will be a profit for the exhibitor of the Burmese pictures in the long run?

A. There are first class quality and second class quality films. In the case of first class quality films that will be a paying concern. But in that case the producers themselves hire the hall and run the show.

Q. How much do you get?

A. When I let it on hire sometimes over 100 rupees a day. I have to supply all gate-keepers, operators, lights, etc.

Q. Who sells the tickets?

A. They have to control them.

Q. You give your hall on fixed rent?

A. They did on percentage business before, but now they have stopped it. Supposing I did not agree to these terms they will go to the other theatre.

Q. Owing to the locality they come to you perhaps?

A. Yes. Accommodation also is better here. Sometimes others give their hall for Rs. 60. For the sake of the rent some go there.

Q. Have you to do this fixed rent business very often?

A. Not very often. They come once in 3 months or 4 months. Especially the Favourite Company, with good pictures, hire the hall. They never go on a percentage basis. If they did come on that basis they will give us 20 per cent. and they will take the balance. Sometimes I take 35 per cent. and I pay all advertisement charges and also for the music.

Q. How was yesterday's picture run?

A. On a 50 per cent. basis. All advertisement charges are to be borne by me. It was not a very good audience and the photography also was not good.

Mr. Neogy: Whose production was it?

A. New Burma Film Company. It is a newly started company and this is the second picture they have produced.

Q. Do you finance any of the producers at all?

A. No.

Q. Have you to enter into any contract with the producers to the effect that you will take all their films?

A. Yes. I do it myself.

Q. Are you compelled to take all the films or do you choose and take?

A. I am not compelled to take. But I must keep the show going and therefore I take all the pictures.

Q. If you show Burmese pictures every week, you will require at least 52 pictures every year?

A. Yes. But I show some films for 2 or 3 weeks.

Q. How many films do you show altogether every year?

A. Sometimes I have to show the pictures once shown, I mean repetition of the same pictures. In cold seasons even if a good picture is shown we will not get a good audience. At such times we adopt repetition of old pictures.

Q. How many new pictures do you get in the year? Do you get all the production in the whole of Burma?

A. We can get 20 complete pictures in the year. I mean from all the producers put together.

Q. What will be the length of these films?

A. Between 12,000 and 15,000 feet. Generally it is not less than 13,000 feet.

Q. You mean Burmese pictures?

A. Yes.

Q. Do educated Burmans go to these shows?

A. If the pictures are good or if they are of educational value they go. Most of them are historical or plots taken from western stories. The plot is western with Burmese customs, manners, etc.

Q. But the other Indians do not go to these Burman pictures. Do they?

A. No. They go very seldom. Because they never put the English titles. The titles are in Burmese. Also the music is different and does not suit the other nations. So Europeans also do not see it. Lately on account of this disadvantage the Favourite Company put English titles.

Q. Did they?

A. Yes. Perhaps during your stay at Rangoon you might see that.

Chairman: I suppose you are confined to your own cinema?

A. I visit other cinemas also.

Q. You are also familiar with the western pictures shown here?

A. Yes. I was showing western pictures. There was a good income also. Afterwards there was too much competition. Even now when I am showing Burmese pictures only, they want to knock me out completely from this place. I was paying Rs. 350 originally. At the end of my lease term, Madans interfered and I had to pay Rs. 500. Now again I am paying Rs. 500 plus the municipal taxes. This comes to Rs. 600 on the whole a month. Now again they are trying to knock me out. In Rangoon they have taken away so many cinemas. In each and every district they want to get themselves in.

Q. But how will that pay them?

A. Though it may not pay them sufficiently now, in the long run they will put their prices up when there is no one to compete with them. Now they claim Rs. 175 per day. On the other side they take only Rs. 150. The clause is that they must use Madans' gate-keepers and other people. This is what has happened in Rangoon. Here also they are trying to get me out. Their idea is that as I have been here for a long time, I could not go to other localities.

Q. What do you advise? It is because of the trade competition?

A. No doubt; but I would suggest that each exhibitor should not have more than one cinema at each station.

Q. Supposing nobody else comes forward; what is to be done?

A. There will be other exhibitors who would like to come forward.

Q. Supposing there is only one cinema and other cinemas want to come into existence and this man is willing?

A. There is room for others; but the big concerns are taking the monopoly of the pictures; for instance, I cannot get these Burmese pictures, for they say "if you want to show my pictures, come to my place".

Q. That is so in every trade, is it not?

A. But they intentionally want to have a monopoly in India and Burma, and the other exhibitors cannot afford to come forward and compete with them.

Q. But why don't you enter into a contract?

A. I must have the necessary capital to compete with them.

Q. It is only a question of the power. Why don't you form a company, as they have done, and work up, just as they do?

A. But I have not got the mind to rob another man's money.

Q. That happens in every trade?

A. If, for instance, a millionaire takes a contract for the produce of the Burman market and he sells rice, the poor people will suffer. I think Government should have some power to put a stop to such things.

Q. But who prevents you from doing that?

A. We are not able to do it.

Q. You have no complaint to make about the western films?

A. No; they are very good nowadays. Only the serials are not very popular, as there are too many points which uneducated people cannot follow.

Q. What about the posters?

A. There is nothing wrong with them.

Q. Have you seen them?

A. Yes, several times.

Q. What are the posters and hand-bills which were handed over to Mr. Neville Rolfe last year? Do you know what those posters and hand-bills were?

A. I know nothing about it.

Colonel Crawford: You have seen good Burmese films?

A. Yes.

Q. What amount of money will they take monthly?

A. The second-class picture about Rs. 1,500.

Q. And they show it for a week?

A. Yes. For the first class pictures, it is Rs. 3,500 or Rs. 4,500, and that also for one week. They generally show such things for two weeks and on an average clear Rs. 8,000 or Rs. 9,000 from Mandalay.

Q. They could not get any more?

A. No.

Mr. Neogy: You stated that about 20 films are available every year. How many of these 20 would you class as first-class?

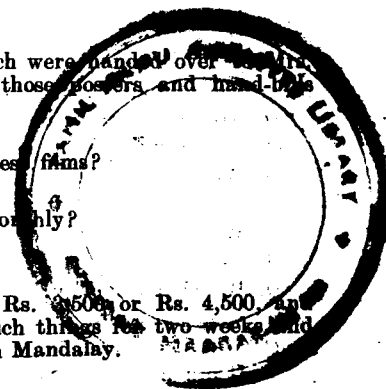
A. About 10 pictures, or 50 per cent.

Q. Second-class?

A. The rest.

Q. You have already stated that you generally choose your own films?

A. I show all the films, i.e., every picture that comes to me; and I am obliged to do it.



Q. You will have to enter into a definite engagement with the producer before you show any particular film. How do you find out generally whether a film is a first-class or a second-class film?

A. I go by the name of the producer. Some pictures may be good and some may be bad.

Q. Have you been disappointed at any time, i.e., have you taken any second-class film for a first-class?

A. Yes, I have been disappointed.

Q. Have you had any occasion to take a first-class for a second-class?

A. No.

Q. Although you got the second-class picture, you had to pay at the first-class rate?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you enter into this arrangement with the producers direct or through any distributing agency?

A. There is an agency for second-class pictures. The agency will generally write to me when the hall will be available and all that. But for first-class pictures, they deal with me direct. Only for second-class pictures we have an agency.

Oral Evidence of U. KYAW YAN, Retired Inspector of Schools, Burma, on Tuesday, the 24th January 1928 (given in Burmese, which was translated by U Ba Pe).

Chairman: Are you a resident of Mandalay?

A. Yes.

Q. Were you at any time connected with the cinema?

A. I have been only a spectator. I am anxious to give some suggestions in the matter of production.

Q. How did you happen to interest yourself in that?

A. Some of the producers have approached me to give stories from the past, from jathakas and other things.

Q. Are you a scenario writer? Have you written stories?

A. I have written one or two stories.

Q. What stories were they? Connected with the royal family?

A. Yes, connected with the royal family.

Q. Was that story produced on the film?

A. Yes.

Q. By what company?

A. I do not know the name.

Q. Was it a success?

A. It did not bring much.

Q. What are you?

A. A retired Deputy Inspector of Schools.

Q. Vernacular schools?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you go to the cinema often?

A. About twice a month.

Q. Do you go to the Burmese films or to the western films?

A. To both.

Q. You are satisfied with the western films shown here?

A. I saw them from an educational point of view and I am satisfied with them.

Q. That is, you mean, the people receive knowledge by seeing them?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you think there is any bad effect caused by the western films?

A. People get somewhat passionate by seeing some films. That is all.

Q. Are there many such films shown here, or only a few?

A. About 50 per cent.

Q. Have they any bad effect on the people?

A. Yes.

Q. On people young and old, or only on young people?

A. Passionate films have bad effect on elderly people, thrilling scenes or robbery scenes affect the young people and children.

Q. What do you mean by "elderly people"?

A. I mean people above 20 years.

Q. What do you mean by "young people"?

A. From 14 to 20 years. They are affected by the robbery scenes, etc.

Q. Have you seen many such films where people get inspiration for committing robbery?

A. Very few.

Q. When did you see one like that last?

A. About 20 days ago.

Q. What did you see, some scenes, or the whole story?

A. I saw some Burmese pictures.

Q. I am referring now to western films; I shall ask you later on about the Burmese pictures?

A. I saw a western film one month ago.

Q. What was the scene that you saw?

A. I do not remember.

Q. Why do you think that it leads to crime?

A. There are some pictures showing scenes of robbery. On people who are inclined to robbery, they will have an effect.

Q. Have not they also a good effect on them? In the particular picture that you saw, was the criminal punished?

A. Yes, he was punished.

Q. So the story had a good moral?

A. Suppose there is a picture showing drinking going on. The Burmese see only that part where drinking is encouraged and they don't wait for the result. They don't wait to see the harm in it.

Q. Do they follow the result in an Indian film or in a Burmese film? Are they able to follow the moral of the picture in a Burmese film?

A. Just the same thing happens there.

Q. Do you refer to the Burmese people who are educated or uneducated?

A. I refer to uneducated people.

Q. Do many of them go to a western film?

A. What do you mean by "educated" and what do you mean by "uneducated"?

Q. What do you understand them to mean? You introduced the expression "educated"?

A. By "educated" I mean those who fear to do anything bad.

Q. That is the people who are moral?

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Q. What do you understand them to mean? You introduced the expression "educated"?

A. By "educated" I mean those who fear to do anything bad.

Q. That is the people who are moral?

A. Yes.

- Q. Are there many people in Burma who are not moral in that sense?
- A. Among those who go to the cinema, about 75 per cent. are uneducated in that sense.
- Q. That is, you mean they have already got an inclination to do wrong? Do you mean to say that 75 per cent. of the cinema-goers have already got an inclination to do wrong?
- A. Not exactly that. What I mean is that those who go to the cinema are not considered to be very good people.
- Q. Do you mean to say then that cinema-going itself is wrong?
- A. Elderly people consider that cinema-going is bad.
- Q. That is you think people between 20 and 30 should not go?
- A. No; elderly people do not consider it good manners to go to the cinema. Those who go to the cinema are mostly children, people who have not got English education and ladies. Respectable people do not go to the cinema.
- Q. Do you yourself think it is wrong to go to the cinema?
- A. I think we can see those films which are of an educative value.
- Q. Which are more numerous, educative films or bad films?
- A. Bad films are more numerous.
- Q. Does it apply both to Burmese films and Western films?
- A. It applies to both.
- Q. Then Burmese pictures are also open to that objection?
- A. Burmese pictures are more open to objection; they generally begin with fighting scenes, etc.
- Q. Do you object to fencing with swords, etc.?
- A. Children used to take alarm when they see these things.
- Q. Children of what age?
- A. About 11 or 12 years.
- Q. Do you consider that children should not be taken to such shows?
- A. Sometimes they can go there, not always.
- Q. On the whole you think the cinema has more bad effect than good?
- A. Generally bad.
- Q. So you would like to see them closed?
- A. I do not want to close them; I only want to improve them.
- Q. What are your suggestions to improve the cinema?
- A. We should have very good censors. We have a censorship board in Burma, and I think 50 per cent. of the members in it should be Buddhist Burmans. At present the board consists of people of whom the majority are non-Burmans. They are not able to judge things from a Burmese point of view.
- Q. Supposing you were on the board, of the films that are now being shown, how much would you have cut off?
- A. About 50 per cent. I would have cut off.
- Q. Both in the Burmese and in the western films?
- A. Only some scenes here and there, where robbery is shown, or passionate scenes, etc., not exactly full pictures.
- Q. Supposing you want to show the life of a thief and also the way in which he was finally captured, what will you do?
- A. The cinema-goers who are mostly young men, when they see such pictures they will only take the cleverness of the thief and not the result.
- Q. As an educationist yourself, have you told to your pupils the life and exploits of Robin Hood?

- A. We have not got such stories in our Burmese literature and so we have no need to teach such stories to our pupils.
- Q. Do you tell any stories about wicked people in the world?
- A. Yes, we do.
- Q. Would you not in the same way show through the pictures what the wickedness was which was done by that man?
- A. Every story has two sides, e.g., the "Moth" (?) In that story we had a lot of things good and bad, but good things predominated over bad there.
- Q. Don't you think good becomes more prominent by showing bad things?
- A. Not in Burma.
- Q. Therefore you want more Burmese people on the Board of Censors and you want stricter censorship especially in the Western films?
- A. Yes, that is what I want.
- Q. What is it you want to suggest to improve the Burmese film industry? You said you wanted to make some suggestions?
- A. We must not have a lot of pictures depicting novels. We must have a lot of our ancient stories taken out in pictures and these must be shown to the public at large, stories which really do good.
- Q. Do you think people will go to the cinemas if it was all good as you want?
- A. Yes, people will go.
- Q. Even if only the good side of life is shown?
- A. I think so. I want only the ancient Buddhist stories to be picturised. Modern novels should not be filmed.
- Q. For instance, you would object to social dramas on the films, I suppose? Supposing a Burman wants to criticise the present Western habits of life, their manners and customs, if he wants to discourage social habits as they now obtain in the West, would you object to such films?
- A. Most of the people in Burma are in favour of preserving our ancient habits and customs, and naturally we would not like such films at all.
- Q. Supposing a story is written by a Burman depicting the evils of Western habits, would you object to that?
- A. It is against our taste, I would object to that.
- Q. So you want ancient stories to be depicted more largely. What else do you want to be done?
- A. My most important suggestion is about the censorship, I want censorship to be more strict. And there should be Burmese Buddhists on the Board.
- Q. And you want every film to be seen by these Burmese Buddhists?
- A. Yes.
- Q. Do you want only one Burmese Buddhist or that the whole Board should see every film?
- A. The whole Board should inspect every film.
- Q. Supposing there are 8 members and there are 4 Burmese Buddhists, you want the whole Board to view each film?
- A. All the 4 Burmese Buddhists must see it.
- Q. You are not satisfied with any censorship done outside Burma. Supposing films are censored in Bombay and Bengal and sent over here, you would not be satisfied?
- A. All the films should be re-censored in Burma when they are sent to Burma.

Q. Would you have a woman on the Board?

A. I wouldn't mind if there is no woman at all.

Q. Supposing there are 4 Burmans on the Board, would you like 2 of them to be women?

A. It is too early for any lady to be on the Board of Censors. I am not for including ladies on the Board.

**Written Statement of the Rev. H. V. SHEPHERD, B.A., Principal,
Wesleyan Methodist Boys' High School, Mandalay.**

1. I have no special knowledge of, or connection with the Cinematograph Industry.

2. (a) In Mandalay Burmans both of the educated and illiterate classes attend cinemas in large numbers, and I think attendances are increasing.

3. Comics (e.g., Charlie Chaplin, Harold Lloyd, Buster Keaton, etc.) and pictures of very vigorous action (fights, races, etc.) are the most popular.

5. Burmese films appear to be available, and are of good quality, but are not popular.

6. (a) Films depicting scenes from Burmese literature, history and mythology are not as popular as Western films, as they are too slow in action.

8. It would be an advantage if the Burmese film industry could be aided, and thus made capable of producing films of National life and history with a more vigorous scenario.

14. Educational films could be made very useful, but there seems to be little demand for them.

16. Burmans are natural actors, but they do not seem to have sufficient technical knowledge to compete with Western producers.

18. Government aid should do much to improve the Burmese Industry, but I have no suggestion to offer apart from suggestions which have already been made to the Committee.

21. I do not advocate State management.

22-23. It would be an advantage from an educational point of view to Burma if films showing the industries of the Empire could be exhibited in this Province. Films of special interest to schools are shown at special matinees, and such facilities could be given for these films produced under the policy outlined by the Imperial Conference.

24. The films exhibited in Mandalay are for the most part not demoralising.

(c) Films with a large element of sex life (courting, abduction, eloping, etc.) or showing dacoities or crime are harmful to adolescents.

(d) Some films (e.g., "Parisian Nights," "The Lure of Paris," "A Cafe in Cairo," "Nero") which have been passed by the censors should not be shown.

(e) I cannot say.

(f) Schoolmasters have informed me that they have seen boys acting love scenes after seeing them at the cinema in a way foreign to their own customs.

25. Undoubtedly.

26. I do not know of any film which has been exhibited in Mandalay which has offended religious susceptibilities.

27. I am of the opinion that the films exhibited here do give a wrong impression of Western life. The Burmans take these films as representing

the normal conditions in England and America, and I have known of many who in consequence imagine that the people of England and America spend their time dancing and drinking and spending large sums in frivolities. Among the illiterate classes this impression is not corrected.

(b) No.

28. Sometimes a film is shown which it would be advisable to prohibit children from seeing. (See answer to 24 (d).)

29. In some cases it would be wise to certify the film as "For adults only"—if feasible.

30. Except an occasional special matinee for schoolchildren, arranged with the heads of schools as is sometimes done now, I do not think that "Children's Performances" could be made a paying proposition.

31-38. I have no suggestions to offer relative to censorship.

39. No.

40. I cannot see how this can be done.

41. I think there has been a decided improvement in the moral standard of films shown in this country in recent years.

42-45.

***Oral Evidence of the Rev. H. V. SHEPHERD, B.A., Principal, Boys'
High School, Mandalay, on Tuesday, the 24th January 1928.**

Chairman: You are the Principal of the Boys' High School, Mandalay?

A. Yes, for the last 3½ years.

Q. Did you come in contact with Mrs. Neville Rolfe?

A. No, I did not see her.

Q. Can you tell us who is the educationist in Mandalay who gave her information regarding educational matters?

A. She delivered all her lectures at the Normal School. I think the Principal of the School, Mr. Mallavar (?) would have supplied her with all the information. I was not able to attend her lectures but many masters from my school attended her lectures.

Q. Was it a conference for the purpose of delivering lectures or was it for forming an association?

A. So far as I am aware no association was formed.

Q. I don't know whether you have seen her report—the Memorandum on the Cinema by the Social Hygiene Delegation.

A. No, I have not seen that.

Q. Will you just glance through her report, paragraphs 1, 3, 9 and 10? (Chairman handed over the report to the witness).

A. (After glancing through the same): I have just had the purport of it.

Q. May I invite your special attention to this statement of hers "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". Do you agree with that statement?

A. I don't think so, it cannot possibly be connected with the cinema. I think it is very widespread in Burma.

Q. And what do you say to this statement which occurs in paragraph 3 of her report "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". Do you agree?

A. That is not to my knowledge. I have not heard of any such thing, not in Mandalay, at any rate.

Q. And then in paragraph 10 she says: "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". I suppose you are familiar with films shown in Great Britain?

A. Yes, I am.

Q. Do you think there is any difference in the standard of western films shown in Great Britain and here?

A. By Western films, I gather, mostly sensational films are meant?

Q. Is there any difference between the films shown here and in England?

A. I don't think there is any difference. As a matter of fact only about 4 pictures that were shown in Mandalay in recent years could be said, if at all, to be unsuitable.

Q. Have you seen any of those pictures yourself?

A. I have not seen them myself. My teachers have seen them and when I asked them whether they considered those films harmful in any way, they mentioned those pictures.

Q. How often do you yourself go to the cinemas?

A. I don't go very often. Perhaps once a month or so. My Boarders go about once a week or so and I have heard about these pictures from them and from my teachers as well.

Q. Do you think there is really anything seriously wrong with the Western films shown here?

A. I think the standard has improved very much of late. I saw pictures shown in Calcutta and Delhi a few years back and I think the pictures that we now see are a very great improvement upon them.

Q. I think there are more feature films now than serials?

A. No, they still have serials fairly frequently, which are not undesirable on the whole.

Q. Do you think there is any serious objection to the cinemas?

A. My teachers have told me that there is some danger generally, especially in the representation of sex relations in films in the 3 or 4 films which they considered unsuitable. Perhaps that is the feature of the film itself. The Burman outlook on life is very different from the Western. What we consider the most innocent way of dealing with a subject is considered by them to be most delicate. My teachers themselves recognised that it would be better to cut out some portions of the films which they objected to and I, too, believe that it would be best. My fear is that people in Burma won't realise that what they see in pictures does not represent the normal conditions.

Q. Do you think that the Burmese are not shrewd enough to understand the difference between the stage and real life?

A. I was very much surprised myself to hear from an educated Burmese lady who had had a college education and who was going for training abroad, that there were no poor people in England.

Q. Is there much harm done by such a belief?

A. That is only an indication of the way of thinking. And I am told, they do consider that the serials that are shown largely show the real life of the people in the West and that the people spend their lives there just as they are depicted in these serials, such as dancing, drinking, etc.

Q. But I suppose the scenario writer depicts the normal life, generally?

A. Mostly they are exaggerated. This is particularly the case when they are sensational pictures where love interest is depicted.

Q. But you are aware that they don't produce these pictures for Burma and India and it is only a negligible factor to them?

A. And I don't object to the main run of the films shown now.

Q. You think public opinion is gradually having its effect on the tone of these pictures?

A. I don't know whether it is public opinion or not, but there is a general toning down, undoubtedly.

Q. So your belief is that a little more care should be exercised by the censors in passing such scenes as you have in mind?

A. Yes.

Q. At present the influence of the cinema is negative, it may not have much harm, I suppose?

A. I cannot say but there are other things at work. The cinema may have its effect but it has no uplifting influence at any rate.

Q. Some films, you admit, really do good?

A. Yes, certainly, and then the Managers of these Cinemas are good enough to arrange special matinees for the benefit of our pupils. I cannot say this about the popular pictures which are shown. Industry films and travel films introduced into these pictures would tend to make the cinemas most entertaining.

Q. I dare say you will agree that educational films would also be useful?

A. Yes, undoubtedly, for good or for bad.

Q. Have you ever thought of introducing the cinema in your own school?

A. Our Mission has been thinking of introducing one but the present position of our funds does not permit of our so doing.

Q. In schools and colleges cinemas could be used for imparting instruction, I suppose?

A. Yes, certainly.

Q. And you also agree that cinemas could be used very largely for mass education?

A. Yes. There are already travelling cinemas but they are not well understood especially by the people in the jungles.

Q. Are there many travelling cinemas like that here?

A. I think there are a few. Others in our Mission have seen them and they have told me that even some of the comics shown by these travelling cinemas leave the people cold.

Q. And, so far as you are aware, you cannot say there is any positive effect caused by such films on the people? It is more a fear that it may have a tendency in that direction?

A. So far as Burmese films are concerned I have not heard anything said against them. Generally Burmese films are of good tone and quality too, but they are not very popular here. I have seen 2 Burmese films myself and they certainly had a good tone.

Q. Their technique is not up to the Western standard?

A. Though not quite up to the standard, they don't add unsuitable scenes which are sometimes seen in the Western films. I think more Burmese films would be of advantage to Burmans.

Q. And you think it would be useful to do something in that direction?

A. I think so. My masters too have told me so. Generally the Burmese pictures depict the mythological and historical side of their country, which are on the whole quite good, but sometimes they try to put a Burmese setting on to an English story which is not satisfactory.

Q. Do you advocate scholarships for these people to go abroad to study the technique of the art?

A. That has been suggested in the questionnaire. I have not thought over the question myself. I don't know whether it will be useful at all to express my personal opinion.

Q. I mean, to encourage people who are already in the profession to go abroad to improve their knowledge of the art?

A. I am afraid, I cannot answer that question as I have not thought over that.

Q. Very well. Have you seen the posters and handbills of these cinemas?

A. Yes, they are very widely advertised.

Q. Have you found anything objectionable in them, either in the pictures or the letterpress?

A. I cannot point to any definite picture, but the whole thing is only an advertising stunt. This is one of the handbills which I have come across recently. (Hands over a copy of a handbill to the Chairman.)

Q. I don't think there is very much in that which may be called sensational. What is it you see in this handbill?

A. It is not a typical one.

Q. Does it contain anything important?

A. There is nothing there.

Q. This is a normal handbill?

A. Yes.

Q. We were given to understand that a number of handbills or posters were given to Mrs. Neville Rolfe by some educationist here in Mandalay. I have been trying to find out those posters for the last two months. She wrote to the Home Department that he was an educationist.

A. I asked my masters also about it, to bring in any such posters but we have not been able to find any.

Q. We should like to know and find out what they were.

A. We are not able to get them at all.

Q. She says he was in Europe last November on a holiday and she handed them over to an educationist in Mandalay. Is there any such educationist here in Mandalay?

A. There is one Superintendent of a Mission. But he has not told me of any such thing at all. I do not know who that can be. I searched all the posters that I had and tried to find out whether I had any such posters.

Q. Perhaps this was the worst you could pick out?

A. Yes. Therefore I put it in my pocket as a sample.

Q. We would like to have it if you won't mind?

A. Yes. You can have it.

Q. Have you come across any scenario writers among the Burmese?

A. No.

Mr. Neogy: Is your school a boarding school?

A. Yes. We have got 60 boarders and 400 day scholars.

Q. Do they very often go to the cinemas?

A. Yes. Once a week.

Q. Do all of them go?

A. No. Those who want to go will go. Not all of them. On Saturdays I give them permission to go.

Q. Does anybody accompany them?

A. As a rule the respective masters accompany them.

Q. Is the nature of the particular film which they go to see considered before going?

A. We can only see the posters.

Q. Is it your experience that the posters are sometimes misleading? They do not give you an exact idea of the picture?

A. I think we can get some idea of the picture from the posters.

Q. So in that way, is it not possible sometimes to avoid taking these students to the undesirable pictures?

A. It will be.

Q. I suppose your boys are mostly Burmese boys?

A. Yes.

Q. Do they ever go to the Burmese pictures too?

A. They go very seldom. They do not like them. They like pictures of very vigorous action and the Burmese pictures are not so very interesting to them.

Q. When these batches are made of the boys do you classify them according to age? I mean, of course, when you take them to the cinema.

A. No.

Q. What would be the age of the youngest boys that go to the cinema?

A. About 12. It ranges up to 23.

Q. Do they make any suggestions as to the sort of picture they want to see?

A. No. They go just to see the cinema. They make a distinction only between Western and Burmese pictures.

Colonel Crawford: You generally find nothing wrong, on the whole, with these films?

A. I have not seen a picture that I should really condemn.

Q. What are the particular scenes which you would like to see cut out?

A. The capricious cabaret shows and very elaborate love-making and close-up scenes.

Q. You mention that western love-making appears possibly indelicate to the Burmese?

A. Yes.

Q. Can you give me any comparison in English plays so as to show how indelicate it is to their nation?

A. They consider that a woman to be kissed in public is immoral.

Q. It does not affect much more than that?

A. No, I should not think so.

Q. I am thinking more about the boys. That is considered as against the sense of public decency? The parents who saw a film of that sort would not allow their boys to go and see that film? They will exert control over their children, not to go and see it?

A. Yes.

Chairman: Even hugging also is considered like that?

A. Yes. Man and woman touching each other in public is considered as indecent.

Colonel Crawford: I am trying to find out what in England could be considered as of the same stamp? You agree that the Burmese film is not attractive to the boys?

A. That is the main reason why they do not go. If they had an attractive film they would certainly go.

Q. Have you seen any Chinese film?

A. No, I have not.

Q. I notice that you advocate the policy of setting apart certain films for children?

A. I do not advocate it. I only say that good films like "Ben Hur" that we have here are really suitable to children and they can be stated to be so:

Q. Do you advocate the policy of prohibiting Indian or Burmese children from attending.....?

A. I do not advocate any such policy. Occasionally if they have a picture worth showing to the children they can show it. I do not advocate anything like that as a rule. I rather disagree with it.

Q. There is no definite demoralising effect caused by the cinema?

A. I don't think so.

Mr. Green: I have got only one question. You referred to the misunderstanding that is in some degree inevitable in the case of uneducated people when they see an entirely foreign picture. Does that misunderstanding do any harm to the public?

A. Yes. It does. If the Burmese see some of these films that show such scenes as I have mentioned—kissing and other scenes like the exaggerated kind of wealthy and loose living—they think that it is the normal life abroad. It is also likely they will begin to imitate that.

Q. It would not hurt them?

A. I don't say that. They consider this as immodest though this is not immodest in western life. It is an exaggeration of all these kinds of scenes I am talking about. Closing up a love scene and then bringing it on again after a long time.

Chairman: That is objectionable for all people.

Colonel Crawford: You can get expression only by exaggerated action?

A. It need not necessarily be prolonged always.

Chairman: Just as the expression of anger is shown, expression of love also is shown by prolonged action.

A. The scenario writer can, I think, convey his meaning in the sub-titles.

***Oral Evidence of Mr. I. M. C. BAWA, Municipal Commissioner,
Mandalay, on Tuesday, the 24th January 1928.**

Chairman: I suppose you are a resident of Mandalay?

A. Yes. I am here for the last 35 years.

Q. Do you come from India?

A. Yes.

Q. You are a Municipal Commissioner in this place?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you go to the cinema often?

A. Very often.

Q. Do you go to see the western films? You get very few Indian films here?

A. We get proportionately good Indian films. Of course, they are very few.

Q. You do not go to see Burmese films?

A. I do. Now and then I go there.

Q. Many Indians do not go?

A. Only very few Indians go.

Q. Do you like and appreciate Burmese films?

A. Some of the films are very artistic.

Q. Supposing Burmese films, which are artistic, are sent to India. Do you think they will be popular there?

A. No, I don't think so.

Q. Why not?

A. Because Burmese life is unknown to India.

Q. So also in western life. Still they appreciate it.

A. But they are more familiar with their language and with the customs and habits of western people.

Q. Is that the only reason why they would not value it?

A. There is also some defect in the production.

Q. Supposing the production was improved?

A. Even then it will not be popular in other parts of India.

Q. Do you mean to say that even the best Burmese film does not attract the Indians here?

A. No, they don't attract.

Q. And with regard to the best Indian film has it ever come here?

A. Yes. Such films come but they attract only Indians.

Q. What do you think the reason can be? You think it is because they are not familiar with the surroundings?

A. Yes.

Q. Supposing there were Burmese captions in Indian films? Would such films attract a good audience here?

A. Even then the stories are not known to these people.

Q. Take, for instance, the lives of Rama, Bharata, Krishna. You do not think they are familiar with those stories?

A. No. With the exception of the life of Buddha they do not know these at all.

Q. Why is it that Indians do not attend Burmese plays? They must be able to follow Buddha's life and the Buddhist religion?

A. They do not go to the Burmese plays.

Q. Can you read Burmese?

A. Yes.

Q. You are able to follow Burmese plays?

A. Yes. I am able to follow them. Because I was educated here and my second language was Burmese. I appreciate them.

Q. Taking people like you, will they find any difficulty in appreciating them?

A. No.

Q. People of your knowledge and who know the Burmese language go to these films?

A. Although they may understand the language, only very few of them go.

Q. I suppose you see many western films here?

A. Yes.

Q. What is your opinion about the effect of those films on the people here? Good effect or bad effect?

A. I think it has no bad effect.

Q. Not even on young people?

A. I suppose the young people may be affected a little.

Q. You mean momentarily affected? They get excited when they see it and then forget it? Is it what you mean?

A. I should think so. I do not think they carry it outside.

Q. The previous witness that said what they see inside they go and act outside. Do you believe in that?

A. Unless something of a very interesting nature has happened I do not think they carry it outside.

Q. That is what is stated: "Schoolmasters have informed me that they have seen boys acting love scenes after seeing them at the cinema in a way foreign to their own customs".

A. But they copy and follow certain acts.

Q. In what respects do they copy?

A. The method of acting Burmese acts differ from the Western. There is nothing wrong in it as far as I could see. They learn the western ways of acting.

Q. They derive more knowledge also?

A. Yes.

Q. You do not think there is any evil effect produced on the minds of the adolescents?

A. No. I don't think so.

Q. Do they suggest criminal methods to people to commit crimes or anything of that sort?

A. Except to those who belong to the criminal tribes, I don't think so.

Q. You mean to say they would be criminals even without going to the cinema?

A. Yes. Such people will commit the same crime even without going to the cinema.

Q. Are you satisfied generally with the moral tone of the films which are shown here? I mean in the case of both Indian and Burmese and also Western?

A. I do not know much about the western films. But it appears they go very often to these shows. Unless they appreciate them they would not go.

Q. As a father and an elder-brother you find nothing wrong in them?

A. I think there is nothing wrong in what they see on the screen.

Q. Do you think that the censorship is adequate?

A. Yes. I think it is adequate.

Q. Are you satisfied with the constitution of the censorship board?

A. I am not aware of it.

Q. What about these handbills and posters which you see? Have you seen any objectionable things in them?

A. No.

Q. Do you think that Burmese films are likely to become better if left to themselves? Or do they require any extraneous aid?

A. If they are left to themselves I don't think they can improve.

Q. What do you think should be done?

A. I think the industry requires a good deal of encouragement.

Q. In what direction?

A. In the direction of finance.

Q. And what else?

A. In technical knowledge also.

Q. In the direction of finance what do you suggest should be done?

A. I think they should float companies.

Q. But who is to float them?

A. Those who are interested.

Q. Then you want to leave it to themselves to do it?

A. Yes.

Q. But just now you told us that if left to themselves they would not improve?

A. Yes. If financial aid were to be given to these cinema films there are other more important directions in which public money could usefully be spent.

Q. What is your final opinion?

A. No State aid should be given to them. They must be encouraged to form companies of their own.

Q. How would you encourage them? By doing what? By appointing an Inspector General of Cinemas or something of that sort?

A. The Director of Local Industries should be the head of these things and he should try and put them on a proper basis, give them the necessary advice and make them help themselves.

Q. You think that will be the better course?

A. Yes. He ought to take more interest in the cinema productions.

Q. Do you think there should be an Advisory Board to advise the Director of Industries on these matters?

A. I think it should be provincial.

Q. What about experts to train them in technical knowledge?

A. What I would like to suggest is that they should be sent to the western countries. I mean to say that young people in the trade should be sent out to learn the art.

Q. Why should not Government start their own studio and employ their experts?

A. That can be done but it means enormous expenditure of money.

Q. I suppose you believe in Government pioneering in any industry? Supposing they start the studio and, when people are sufficiently advanced in their knowledge about this industry, they give it up to somebody else. Would it not be a sound proposal?

A. But in that case people will be taxed very heavily. The Government will have to finance such a big item.

Q. You think they ought not to do it?

A. I would leave the industry to take care of itself.

Q. Would you spend money in sending these scholars abroad in order to train them in technical knowledge?

A. Of course, the State should aid them in that respect.

Q. To that extent you are willing?

A. Yes.

Q. Scholarship for students going abroad; the Director of Industries should take more interest; an Advisory Board; these are the 3 points you want to suggest?

A. Yes. That is all I wish to suggest.

Mr. Neogy: Do you take your children to the cinemas as often as you go?

A. Sometimes I take them.

Q. How old are they?

A. Under 14.

Q. Do you select specially some pictures to which you take your children? Or do you take them to any picture?

A. I take them to any picture. I do not make any selection.

Q. You are a business man I take it?

A. Yes.

Q. You have suggested that the only way to attract capital is the flotation of big companies. If a big company is floated, do you think that sufficient capital would be subscribed to it by businessmen like you?

A. If good people who are capable of running the show will take it up, a man like myself would have confidence in them. In that case shares may be raised by subscription. I do not think there is anything inherently defective that would stand in the way of sufficient capital being subscribed. Provided there was a good Director, people would subscribe as they would do in the case of other companies.

Chairman: Supposing the Director of Industries were to take some amount of interest in this line of business, do you think that it would add to the credit of this particular business? Would it enable the capital to be subscribed more easily?

A. It is only a matter of a little time. In course of time everything will be allright.

Mr. Neogy: You yourself would not hesitate to become a shareholder or Director of such a company?

A. I must be fully confident that it would be well-managed and it would work well.

Q. What sort of return would you expect?

A. I would expect at least a 12 per cent. return.

***Oral Evidence of Mr. J. S. AUGUSTIN, Schoolmaster, Skelly High School, Mandalay, on the 24th January 1928.**

Chairman: You are a schoolmaster?

A. Yes.

Q. You are also the local correspondent for the Associated Press?

A. Yes.

Q. You came in contact with Mrs. Neville Rolfe when she was here in Mandalay?

A. Yes.

Q. Did she have any talk, to your knowledge, with the people about the effect of the cinema?

A. In her lecture she talked about venereal diseases, and in the course of the lecture she said that the cinema was greatly responsible for.....

Q. She told you?

A. She referred to it in her lecture.

Q. Had she any consultation with anybody here?

A. She formed a conference immediately after her third lecture was over.

Q. Were you present at that conference?

A. Yes, I was.

Q. Was there any talk about the cinema then? Or about its bad effect on the people?

A. Yes.

Q. What happened afterwards?

A. Mr. J. H. Neill, one of the headmasters of schools here—the H. P. G. Royal School—he also belongs to the Winchester Mission—said that the cinemas had been responsible for the demoralisation of the people.

Q. Did he produce any hand-bills?

A. He did not produce any at that time, but he gave her some later on.

Q. What sort of handbills? Were they posters?

A. Yes, they were posters.

Q. How many?

A. I think two.

Q. Were they got from the bioscopes?

A. No; they were not actually got from the bioscopes, because bioscope posters could not be had.

Q. Why?

A. Because bioscope managers generally have their posters pasted on to their walls, and they cannot be removed. So he did not get anything, but he himself drew them out.

Q. That is, he copied them?

A. Yes, only copies of such posters were given.

Q. No; I am sure you are making a mistake there.

A. It was like this. He did not give her anything at that moment at the meeting; he only had a talk with her then and said that he had those posters with him.

Q. You did not yourself see any handbill or poster?

A. No.

Q. To your knowledge, besides Mr. Neill, was there anybody else at the meeting?

A. Yes, the Inspector of Schools was there.

Q. Who was that?

A. U Sa Pe.

Q. Did he give any information?

A. They were talking.

Q. Did he confirm the information given?

A. I think he was simply standing silently. There was also present Mr. Macveth, Headmaster of the Government Normal School.

Q. Is he here in town?

A. Yes.

Q. Did any one tell her that the evil influence of the cinema was one of the major factors in lowering the standard of conduct, thereby tending to increase the dissemination of the disease?

A. That was a resolution passed by the conference that assembled there; but I do not know who the man was that brought forward the resolution. There were a lot of Burmese people present, and I think a Burman brought it up.

Q. Was that resolution reported in the press at all?

A. I was not a representative then.

Q. Was a resolution actually moved and passed?

A. I think it was. First she delivered her lecture; after the lecture there was a conference, which was very informal, and Mr. Neill occupied the chair. Somebody brought forward this resolution, I cannot tell you who it was that brought it forward and who was the sender.

Q. That is all you know, I suppose?

A. Yes.

Oral Evidence of Mr. H. J. D. WILKINSON, B.A., Editor "Upper Burma Gazette," on Tuesday, the 24th January 1928.

Chairman: You have seen our questionnaire?

A. I know nothing of the technical side. I have not tried to go through the questionnaire because it was given to me when I was just going away to Rangoon, and I have just come back.

Q. I just want to know what you think generally about the cinema? Do you go to the cinema much?

A. I used to go before; but I have not been able to do that for some time now.

Q. How long ago was it that you used to go often?

A. Say up to two or three years ago; but I see a lot of it now and then. I see the crowds when I pass by the theatres. I know some cinema people also.

Q. What is your opinion about the nature of the films shown? Are you satisfied with their general moral tone?

A. I do not think there is anything objectionable.

Q. You think that the censorship is adequate, so far as it goes?

A. So far as the class of pictures goes, i.e., that have been passed by the Board of Censors, I think there is nothing. In my opinion, we might do something to encourage the Empire films. Most of the films now shown are American films which cause people who do not know English to think very badly of western people. Those which appeal to them most are blood and thunder stories, transportine drama and comic pictures. I do not think there is anything evil to be gathered from them. Those that have evil minds will naturally be affected by anything they see; but it all depends on the class of people that go to the cinemas and their inclinations.

Q. That is, you would put it in the same manner as reading books which depict life in the west?

A. I think so. For instance, I will give my own experience. Before I ever went to school, I had read most of Smollett, Stern, all of Shakespeare, the Bible and many other books. I had the run of my father's library. I used to be always reading some book or other, except those which my father asked me not to read: he said "Don't read that book until you are older". I read the books only for the pleasure of reading. I got not evil from them. It was only when I came to the senior college class, that fellow students, reading them, spoke of them, and it was only then that I came to know there was evil in them. So also I say if the ordinary child or youth or the adolescent goes to see the cinema, he will find evil only if his mind is inclined to that; but if the child is of the right-thinking mind, as I think, most children are, they won't get any evil from these things. On the other hand, they are bound to get some knowledge from them just as one gets it from books.

Q. So on the whole you think there is nothing wrong calling for any remedy?

A. So far as I have seen, no; and, if I can go a little further than that, I will even say that the less we interfere the better.

Q. You will leave it to public opinion to shape itself?

A. Quite so. It is public opinion after all that is the best corrector in these matters. I may mention one point. With regard to question 6 (a)—I have not seen any picture in India, I have seen them only in Burma—whenever there is any Indian picture shown, say some mythological or historical story, you will find all classes of Indians, from the highly educated down to the cooly, going to see it; similarly, when there is anything like "The Ten Commandments", you will find that all the Christians, mostly the uneducated Christians, go to see it always. They like to see generally anything which appeals to their religious sentiment.

Q. What was your business in life?

A. I was a schoolmaster for many years. For the last 35 years I have been a member of the Press, a journalist. For about 13 years, I was a schoolmaster.

Q. Have you been observing the film with a view to form your own opinion?

A. I did not attend the cinema except for amusement. I think there is much to be learnt from it, especially by young minds.

Q. You think then that the film could be made use of for the purpose of supplementing education in schools?

A. It would certainly be very advisable. Especially, when we teach the life history of, say, the mosquito or the hook-worm. The film would be more impressive than half a dozen lectures, I think, on the same subject.

Q. You think that Government should take some steps in that direction to make films of that sort?

A. Yes, but, at the same time, there should not be any competition with private enterprise.

Q. Besides school education, you think for mass education also, Government should do that?

A. Mass education especially. For instance, we have health lectures; an exhibition through pictures would be far more impressive.

Q. Did you come across Mrs. Neville Rolfe of the Social Hygiene Delegation when she was here?

A. No.

Mr. Green: You pointed out that evil-minded persons would find evil anywhere?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you think that even evil-minded persons can be brought round by the cinema if better films are shown? Is that a possibility?

A. If they go to find something evil in the picture and if they don't find it, evidently they will go somewhere else for it.

*Oral Evidence of U. DWE, Secretary of the Myoma National Schools' Committee, Rangoon, on Monday, the 30th January 1928.

Chairman: You are the Secretary of the Myoma National Schools' Committee?

A. Yes.

Q. What is that Committee for?

A. We look after the schools, both the executive office work and the administrative work.

Q. How many schools are there?

A. Two schools, one boys' school, and one girls' school.

Q. I suppose you are interested in the question of educational films?

A. Yes.

Q. Your committee believes in the use of the film for educating the pupils?

A. Yes. Not only am I the secretary of this committee, but I am also a member of the Executive Committee of the Y. M. C. A. Last year we intended to bring out some educational slides from India; we tried to arrange for that with the General Secretary of the Y. M. C. A. who is also a member of the committee. We could not succeed.

Q. You wanted magic lantern slides or what?

A. Yes; to start with, we wanted to have a cheaper kind, and with the co-operation of the schools we are also going to try this year again.

Q. Are you urging upon the Local Government to do something in this direction?

A. We are trying to do that.

Q. Have you got any adult education movement in this province?

A. Yes, we have.

Q. Private effort or Government effort?

A. I think it is combined effort; both by officials and non-officials.

- Q. So, your committee believes in the use of films for mass education?
A. Yes.
- Q. Do the public approve of the use of public funds for this purpose, i.e., for using the films for educational purposes?
A. I think the public would be in favour of that; because the Burmans especially are very fond of bioscopes, in fact they even take to it up as a hobby.
- Q. So you think the educational films would attract the Burmese?
A. Yes.
- Q. And it will be of use to the country?
A. Yes.
- Q. Do you go to the cinema often?
A. Yes, especially when I get the chance of seeing an educational film.
- Q. Do you have many such shows here?
A. We have them occasionally.
- Q. When did you last see such a show?
A. Some time last year I had such an opportunity.
- Q. Where was it shown?
A. I saw the show at the Royal cinema; that was "Hamlet", I think.
- Q. That was the only occasion on which you saw a film of that sort?
A. Yes.
- Q. You want more such occasions to see them?
A. Yes, especially for students, it is better that more such films should be shown.
- Q. Do you go to the Burmese films or to the western films, when you go to the cinema?
A. I go to both.
- Q. What sort of western films are popular with the people?
A. I can speak only of the Burmese. Generally the sensational films attract the people more than the other films.
- Q. That is, you mean thrills, dacoities, going in motor cars, etc.?
A. Yes, especially the films of Douglas Fairbanks.
- Q. And the Burmese films are getting popular?
A. Yes; they are getting popular now.
- Q. Is there a growing desire for Burmese films?
A. Yes, there is.
- Q. Or are they getting dull? Is the novelty of Burmese films wearing off?
A. Personally I should say they need improvement.
- Q. For want of that improvement, are the Burmese films as attractive to the public as before? Do the people attend the Burmese films still in large numbers?
A. Yes, they do.
- Q. You think the growth of Burmese films ought to be encouraged?
A. Yes, they should be encouraged. I should like to point out that most of the pictures screened by the Burmese people here are more or less a direct imitation of the European shows. That is what I have noticed. Sometimes they are direct translations; even the acting is the same very often.
- Q. You mean they take certain western stories and translate them into Burmese?
A. Yes.
- Q. But have they not got a Burmese setting?
A. What is done now is nothing but a translation of the western stories.

- Mr. Green: Do they actually take the western films, serials, etc.?
A. They copy the film itself; sometimes even the acting; I think they copy the setting even.
- Chairman: Unfortunately we are not in a position to judge, because of the language difficulty. Nor have we seen many Burmese films so as to be able to form our own opinion, about them. So your reasoned conviction is that there is a tendency more to translate than to produce originals?
A. I cannot say that; but that is what they do I think. For instance, I have seen a picture of a Burmese film which was shown in a western film, only the actors dressed in Burmese style. Even the setting, I must say, is the same.
- Q. Can you give us an instance where you think it was more or less a translation of the western film?
A. Many pictures are depicted in the same way; I cannot particularise any one. The general tone is the same.
- Q. What is that due to? Is it because educated people have not taken to it?
A. Most of the actors and actresses are not well educated.
- Q. So it is because they are not well educated?
A. They can only act for the stories set for them.
- Q. Then it is not so much their fault as that of the story-writers?
A. It is the director's fault, I think.
- Q. What you complain of is apparently lack of originality; they want rather to imitate than do anything themselves?
A. Yes. What I want is that they should take the initiative.
- Q. What do you think should be done in order to improve the defects you have pointed out?
A. My opinion is that some of our educated young Burmans who have a liking for this line may be trained as directors in foreign countries.
- Q. You want scholarships to be given to students for getting training abroad?
A. Yes.
- Q. I thought the Burmese films are more or less based on mythological stories?
A. Sometime back they were. There is now a tendency to imitate. The hero in Dhruva is nothing but a mere imitation. I don't think we Burmese have anything like the cowboy, dressed in long boots and trousers like the cowboys in America. I think it is mere imitation.
- Q. As regards the western films, are you satisfied with the general moral tone of the western films?
A. So far they are good.
- Q. You don't find anything to complain about seriously?
A. Up to now I don't think I have room to complain.
- Q. The films shown here have no bad effect upon the people?
A. I don't think so.
- Q. Have they any demoralising effect upon the people of this country?
A. I don't think so.
- Q. You go to the western films pretty often and you come in contact with young men like yourself?
A. Yes.
- Q. And you have nothing to fear from the western films?
A. Generally what I do is this. If I think a particular film is of an educative value, I always advise the students to go and see it.
- Q. When you say educative film, you mean general knowledge of the other parts of the world, where natural scenery is depicted?

A. Yes.

Q. So you advocate preference being given to such foreign films which have an educative value or something of that sort?

A. I think so.

Q. The difficulty would be that the exhibitor would not be able to draw the same crowd as he would with ordinary entertainment films.

A. I think screening of such films once a week for school students by special advertisement is necessary.

Q. Do you advocate any films being set apart for children only or adults only?

A. I saw a notice sometime back which stated that children under 12 should not come in.

Q. Did they do that?

A. I think the cinema managers both Madans and Globe did it, requesting parents and guardians not to bring children under 12.

Q. When was that?

A. I do not exactly know.

Q. How long did it continue like that?

A. Now it has been dropped.

Q. You don't know why it was dropped?

A. I don't know.

Q. Do you think any film should be marked as not fit to be shown to children or fit to be shown to adults? Do you think any such proposal would be practicable?

A. I think it would be.

Q. The management will not have any difficulty—especially with Burmese children I find it difficult to judge their age—in this respect?

A. I think it is possible with experienced people to judge the age and if the school authorities are asked to co-operate there would be some facility in the work.

Q. So you will leave it to voluntary arrangement and would not advocate a provision inserted in the law stating that children under 12 should not be admitted unless the film is specially certified?

A. I don't want any stringent law.

Q. You must leave it to the good sense of the management and the parents?

A. Yes.

Q. Is there anything else you want to say?

A. No.

Mr. Green: Do you really think that the Burman films dealing with purely Burman subjects are losing their popularity and that people are getting tired of them?

A. I don't know. But of late they are not screening historical plays. There was a demand for them sometime back.

Q. But do you think here in Rangoon they will get better audience for modern versions or westernised films more or less or should they stick to their purely Burman plots?

A. I think the films should be improved. They are imitating western ways very wrongly and sometimes the actors wear wrong dress, for instance, the dress of the fisherman. I don't think any fisherman would wear a silk shirt. It is rather ridiculous. Some of the Directors should, I think, be trained.

Q. Some of the producing companies told us that the truly Burman films were very, very popular, but now they are not so popular as the people are getting tired of the historical pieces. They now want to see something different. Do you think this is the case?

A. The Burmese temperament is that they want something sensational. That is what they like.

Q. The present Burmese films seem to be very lengthy. They take about 12 reels whereas the American films take only 6 or 4 reels. We have been told that the Burmans like long stories.

A. I think it was sometime ago. Now they want comic films. The films produced by Schewas are becoming popular.

Q. Have you seen any?

A. I have. They are popular.

Q. Dealing with Burman subjects?

A. Yes. In fact his films are drawing good crowds. He is the best educated actor, I think. He is a graduate of the Calcutta University.

Q. Would I be right in concluding that the Burman audience does not want films which take 12 reels to complete but want more incidents in the film shown? They want a good return for their money?

A. Yes.

Chairman: Thank you.

Oral Evidence of Mr. W. L. KEOUGH, Manager, "Rangoon Evening Post," on Monday, the 30th January 1928.

Chairman: Have you prepared any statement?

A. I have got just a few points.

Q. You are the editor of the Rangoon Evening Post?

A. No. I am the manager.

Q. Do you go to the cinema often?

A. Quite often.

Q. To what cinemas do you go generally?

A. Nearly all of them.

Q. Both Burman and western?

A. Not so much to Burman pictures as to western ones.

Q. You have seen some of that Western films?

A. Yes; and Chinese also.

Q. Chinese pictures are shown regularly here?

A. For the past six months they have been regularly shown. About 30 Chinese films were imported last year into Rangoon.

Q. Are they showing Chinese pictures specially in any theatres?

A. They generally do it in the Royal Picture Palace, as it is in the Chinese quarter. Sometimes they are shown in Madans.

Q. What is the Chinese population in Rangoon?

A. I don't know exactly. I think it is about 30,000.

Q. The Burmans go to the Chinese theatres?

A. Only in the districts.

Q. In the town they prefer the Burmese films?

A. Yes.

Q. Are Western films popular with the Chinese?

A. Well, most of the educated classes go to see the English films.

Q. When you say educated classes I suppose ordinary merchants and traders do not go?

A. Not many of them.

Q. And those who are in the professions—say medical profession?

A. Most people who understand English prefer western films.

Q. Do they also prefer Chinese films?

A. Yes.

Q. Chinese films are universal?

A. Yes; but some of them are not very popular as they are too old. They come here late.

Q. Too old in time or used up?

A. The pictures that are shown here in Burma were produced some 3 or 4 years ago.

Q. So up-to-date Chinese films do not come here?

A. They go to Singapore first.

Q. I suppose the educated Burman also goes to see the western films in preference to the Burman films?

A. Yes.

Q. But the ordinary man does not care for the western film and prefers the Burman film?

A. Yes.

Q. You say you don't go to the Burmese film?

A. Once in a way I do.

Q. Can you tell us whether the Burmese film is getting more popular or less popular?

A. They are popular. But the pictures have to be improved.

Q. We just now heard it stated that the Burman producer is fonder of translating the western film than producing his film from Burman stories.

A. I have come across some such films.

Q. How do the public take it? Do they like that sort of a film?

A. Well, I can't say. There is a big field in Siam especially for those historic pieces. If the Burmans translate them into Siamese they will be accepted there.

Q. Would they be popular there?

A. I think so.

Q. Do you think the Burman films should be encouraged?

A. Yes.

Q. In what respects?

A. Mostly on educational lines.

Q. How should that be done?

A. I mean to say something instructive, general education.

Q. They should produce more of the educational films? Is that your idea?

A. Yes.

Q. Your point is that Government should do something to encourage them to do it.

A. I think that is the idea with the film producing concerns, that something should be done to help them.

Q. What sort of help should Government give?

A. A subsidy or something of that sort.

Q. Subsidy for good productions, is that your idea?

A. Yes; for good productions in connection with education.

Q. To encourage them some bonus might be given?

A. I think so.

Q. If a film is adjudged to be of educational value, you want Government to give some subsidy for that?

A. They should be given some prize to encourage them.

Q. Why should the producers not produce the films themselves? Would it not be advantageous to them if they did it?

A. I think the making of Burmese films is still in its infancy and it needs some push up.

Q. In giving them better knowledge how to produce them? I meant improving their scenario-writing, acting, etc., is that the sort of improvement that is needed?

A. That is also needed.

Q. Have you any suggestions for improving the film on those lines?

A. I have none.

Q. You have nothing else to say about the Burmese film industry?

A. No.

Q. Are you satisfied with the general moral tone of these pictures?

A. I think I am.

Q. No demoralising effect?

A. Nothing.

Q. You do not think that some of the scenes which are shown have a tendency to spoil the youth of the country?

A. It all depends upon the mentality of the people who go to see the picture.

Q. Has the film any effect on the young in shaping their character?

A. I don't think so.

Q. You are satisfied with the nature of the pictures which are shown?

A. Yes.

Q. You consider them of good educative value?

A. Well; some of them are.

Q. And you don't generally find any of them objectionable?

A. I have not come across any objectionable film.

Q. I suppose you are aware of the activity of the National Women's Council in Burma. Last year they made a report recommending drastic action to be taken. Do you agree with those recommendations?

A. I do not.

Q. Do they represent public opinion?

A. I don't think they represent public opinion at all.

Q. Do you think the Burman public would advocate spending public funds in encouraging the film industry?

A. I can't say.

Q. Would you advocate scholarships being given to deserving Burman young men and women who want to get themselves trained, with a view to improve the industry?

A. Yes.

Q. Have you travelled in the West?

A. No; only in India.

Q. Did you see Indian films?

A. Once in a way.

Q. Do you think Burmese people go to see these?

A. I don't think so.

Q. Why is it that they do not see Indian films? I suppose they do not understand the pictures?

A. Yes.

Q. Supposing they had Burmese captions, titles and sub-titles on Indian films, do you think that would be attractive?

A. That would, to some extent.

Q. That may be the reason why the Burmese do not generally go?

A. It may be.

Q. And Indians do not care to go to Burman films because they do not understand the language and the titles are not given in the Indian vernaculars?

A. I think that is the reason.

Q. That difficulty does not apply to western films?

A. No, because it is mostly the educated persons that go to see the western films generally.

Q. Do you see many children when you go to these shows, children under 12?

A. Not many; only a small percentage go.

Q. Are they generally accompanied by their parents?

A. Yes.

Q. Do Burman women go to western films?

A. Yes; they do.

Q. What class of Burmese people?

A. Mostly educated, those having knowledge of English.

Colonel Ormsford: Which do you prefer yourself, the Western films or the Burmese or Chinese films?

A. Personally I prefer the Western films.

Q. May I take it from that, that the majority of the educated people in Burma prefer Western films?

A. I think so, because Western films are of better quality.

Q. Are the stories better or what is it that you like most in Western pictures?

A. Some people like those fighting scenes and other interesting scenes.

Q. You mean there is more life and variety in the Western pictures?

A. Yes, that is it.

Q. And you think the Burman producers should copy Western models to be more successful?

A. I think so.

Q. Will that not cost more money?

A. Most probably it will cost more.

Q. And will the Burman producer be able to get a good return for money so expended?

A. I think so.

Q. You think there is enough money with the Burman public to give an adequate return?

A. I think there is enough money available in Burma.

Q. Have you seen a picture called "Second to None" now showing in the Globe?

A. No, I have not.

Q. You are aware, as a Journalist, that there is a sort of feeling among the general public that crime is the general outcome of these pictures or at least they are suggested by the films?

A. Yes, I have heard of such a belief.

Q. And do you think there is anything in that belief?

A. I don't think there is anything in that belief at all. If anybody thinks of committing crime there are various other methods of knowledge. They need not copy the methods from the cinema.

Mr. Green: I am very interested in your suggestion that Burman films may find a market in Siam. Is that based on definite information?

A. I know Siam has been very much interested in Burma, its history and its people.

Q. Have you any idea whether films are produced in Siam?

A. No, I have no personal idea.

Q. You know how many cinema houses there are in Siam?

A. I know there are about 10 cinema houses in Bangkok.

Q. Do you know what pictures they show there now-a-days?

A. I have heard that many Chinese pictures are shown there.

Q. I believe Chinese pictures have Chinese titles with English translations?

A. Yes.

Q. Do they give Siamese titles also?

A. I think some of them are translated into Siamese also.

Q. You think the Burmese films are good enough for the Siam?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you know whether there is any import duty on these films when they go to Siam?

A. I don't think there is any duty on Burmese films when they go into Singapore.

Q. And so far as you are aware nobody has made any attempt to levy any duty on these Burmese pictures?

A. I have not heard of any such thing.

Mr. Neogy: Do the Burmese pictures go to Siam?

A. I don't think so.

Q. Do you prefer Chinese films to Burmese films?

A. Well, as a Chinaman, I prefer Chinese films.

Q. And how long have you been in Burma?

A. For about 24 years.

Q. Do you think Chinese people residing in Burma care more for the Chinese films?

A. Yes, I think so.

Q. Do they go in large numbers to see the pictures?

A. Yes, they do sometimes.

Q. Do you find many Burmese going to Chinese films?

A. No, not in Rangoon.

Chairman: Thank you.

Witness: I have got one suggestion to make with your leave.

Chairman: What is it?

A. I should like to have a Chinese representative on the Board of Censors here for censoring Chinese pictures, especially because of the fact that the inscriptions on them are not well translated into English and sometimes the censors get a wrong impression of them.

*Oral Evidence of MOHAMMAD EBRAHIM, Engine and Boiler Merchant, Rangoon, on Monday, the 30th January, 1926.

Chairman: Are you a frequenter of cinemas?

A. Yes, I do go now and then.

Q. What are you please?

A. I am a merchant dealing in engines and boilers in Rangoon.

Q. You are a resident in Rangoon?

- A. Yes.
- Q. To what cinemas do you generally go, Western or Burmese?
- A. I visit both, Western and Burmese films.
- Q. Do you see Chinese films?
- A. Yes, I have seen one Chinese picture.
- Q. Which do you prefer, Western or Chinese films?
- A. I frequent mostly Western films and occasionally I go to Burmese films also.
- Q. Why is that?
- A. Because most of the Burmese films are not good.
- Q. In what respect?
- A. The plot is not original and the photography is bad.
- Q. So you are not satisfied with the technique and the plot?
- A. No.
- Q. Do you find the Western pictures better in that respect?
- A. Yes.
- Q. Are the Burmese films liked by the Burmese people?
- A. They can understand Burmese films better. Ordinary people who can not follow the English language prefer Burmese pictures.
- Q. And so far as people who know English are concerned they prefer Western pictures, I suppose?
- A. Yes.
- Q. Now what do you think should be done? Do you think that the Burmese film industry requires anything to be done to improve it or would you leave it to private enterprise to improve it?
- A. We require better photographers and better actors. Burmans should be sent to the Western countries for training.
- Q. You want the photographer and the Director to be sent abroad for training?
- A. Yes.
- Q. If the Director gets training there he can train actors here on his return: is that what you mean?
- A. Yes.
- Q. For that purpose do you advocate State Scholarships?
- A. Yes, I think it would do much good.
- Q. Or would you prefer to have experts brought here to give instruction?
- A. I would prefer to send our men abroad for training with Scholarships.
- Q. How many students do you want to be sent abroad?
- A. One or two every year for some time till Burmans get good knowledge and the technique of the art.
- Q. Have you at any time found any reason to complain about the nature of the films shown here?
- A. I have no complaint to make either against the Western or the Burmese films shown here.
- Q. Do many young people like you go to Western pictures?
- A. Yes, they do go.
- Q. And by seeing the Western films are they in any way demoralised?
- A. I don't think so.
- Q. You know there was a lot of opinion collected by the National Council of Women, Burma, here. And you know that attracted a good deal of press attention last year?
- A. Yes.
- Q. They condemn the Western films as "demoralising". Do you agree?

- A. I think it mostly depends upon the man or woman who goes to the cinema. If they are already evil-minded they will find evil in the cinema also.
- Q. And do you think the cinema has a good effect on the people and opens up their minds and gives them knowledge of other countries?
- A. Yes, I think so.
- Q. The National Council of Women say that the Western films shown here are "definitely pernicious". Do you agree with that view?
- A. No, I don't think they are pernicious at all.
- Q. They say that a bad public taste has been created by the films shown here, do you agree?
- A. I don't think so.
- Q. They further say that the moral standards of young people are seriously perverted?
- A. I don't agree with that view either.
- Q. Are you in any way interested in the film industry in this country?
- A. I am only a cinema-goer. I am not interested in the industry.
- Q. How often do you go to the cinemas?
- A. About once or twice a month.
- Q. May I take it that you are generally satisfied with the censorship now prevailing here and that it is adequate?
- A. I think the present censorship is quite adequate.
- Colonel Crawford: Have you seen the film in the Globe theatre this week entitled "Second to None"?
- A. I have not seen that film yet, but I have seen the "Flag Lieutenant".
- Q. I suppose it is a very good picture, the photography and all that?
- A. Yes, it is a very good picture.

***Oral Evidence of Mr. KHIN MAUNG GYI, Bar.-at-Law, on Monday, the 30th January 1928.**

- Chairman: You are a resident of Rangoon?
- A. Yes.
- Q. You go to the cinema very often?
- A. Yes, very often.
- Q. Which cinemas?
- A. Usually Madans.
- Q. Of course, Madans show both the Western and Burmese films. Which do you see?
- A. I see Western as well as Burmese films.
- Q. Which more often?
- A. Equally, I think.
- Q. You like them equally?
- A. Yes.
- Q. You think Burmese films are up to the mark?
- A. They are not quite up to the mark.
- Q. In what respect?
- A. They are wanting in technical knowledge and also in finance. They have very little finance and hence they cannot produce bigger films.
- Q. You mean they don't spend enough?
- A. They cannot spend more.
- Q. Is it a paying proposal to the Burmese?
- A. Yes. Very paying.

- Q. In that case why don't they spend?
- A. Private capital is not forthcoming.
- Q. The people in charge of the studios or the producing concerns, at least some of them, do not stand in need of financial aid. Is that so?
- A. Some of them are not in need of financial aid. But the majority of them are small companies.
- Q. Do you know any of them?
- A. Yes. I know the London Art Photo Co.
- Q. London Art Photo Co. should be doing well. They do not suffer from lack of finance.
- A. Nor from lack of technical knowledge so far. I understand that the proprietor has been outside Burma.
- Q. Now you say that the technique here needs improvement. What remedy do you suggest?
- A. They ought to have better camera men.
- Q. You want to train them?
- A. Yes. They must be given better training.
- Q. What do you advocate for that purpose?
- A. If it is possible we ought to send men abroad to get knowledge from the West and America.
- Q. Do you mean that the Government ought to do it?
- A. Under the present circumstances Government should do it.
- Q. Why should Government do it?
- A. Burma is a very poor country. And also the tendency of the people is to look up to the benevolent Government to give help.
- Q. Do you consider it right to encourage that idea?
- A. Yes. Under the present circumstances the Government should encourage the industry.
- Q. What mean in the infant stage?
- A. Yes. It should help at least by way of scholarships if not by subsidies.
- Q. You think as a public man you would tolerate the expenditure of public funds in that direction?
- A. I would.
- Q. After all it is an amusement?
- A. Yes.
- Q. How do you justify expenditure of public funds for amusement?
- A. It is partly amusement and then partly of educational value also. It has great value.
- Q. What educative value have you got in Burmese films? I can understand your saying that about the western films; because they show western life and also the conditions of life in other parts of the world. But how are Burmese films of educative value?
- A. Firstly it can give a good moral education. It gives us an idea about how the heroes should act and so on. Secondly, it helps us by encouraging the growth of national spirit.
- Q. If you encourage the national spirit in that way would it not come in conflict with politics?
- A. I do not think so.
- Q. You want to encourage the growth of national ideals and aspirations?
- A. Yes.
- Q. You mean the stories should be such?
- A. Yes.
- Q. There may be a difference of opinion on this?

- A. Possibly there may be.
- Q. It would not come in conflict with the present-day politics. That is what you think?
- A. If we feel ourselves we will try to better ourselves socially and morally. I do not think that politics could come into it at all. Even if they did it would be healthy politics.
- Q. Everything can be converted into politics and this would be healthy politics?
- A. Yes. Also it could teach civics. I consider there is a lot of educational value, say, in showing better agricultural methods and industrial conditions.
- Q. You have these things also in view?
- A. Yes. Agriculture mostly.
- Q. Which of the two following things would you prefer? Sending people abroad to learn the art or sending for experts to train the people here?
- A. If it is possible we ought to start a school here. That will be preferable.
- Q. Do you think that a sufficient number of students would attend?
- A. Yes.
- Q. In what, photography?
- A. Yes. In photography as well as in all branches of the film industry.
- Q. You think vocational branches should be started in some of the schools?
- A. Yes. Or even a special school for that purpose.
- Q. Do you think the Burma Government will spend the money for that?
- A. I cannot say.
- Q. That means to say we must send for experts?
- A. Yes.
- Q. You know they are very costly?
- A. In the long run it will be cheaper, I think.
- Q. You want them for a short time?
- A. Yes. Till the Burmans are trained.
- Q. So either in the way of giving scholarships abroad or in the way of running an educational institution you want to better the film condition in this country. You consider that the technique may be improved, the story may be improved and also the educative value?
- A. Yes.
- Q. Do Burmese people patronise Burmese films very much?
- A. Yes. They do.
- Q. Especially the uneducated class?
- A. I do not know what you mean by uneducated class, Sir.
- Q. In it, I would put people not well-versed in English.
- A. Yes, as well as ladies.
- Q. You yourself, do you prefer Burmese films or Western films?
- A. I prefer Western films.
- Q. For how many years were you in England?
- A. Six years.
- Q. When did you come out here?
- A. In 1925.
- Q. Do you find any difference in the standard of films shown in England? I mean to say between the films shown here and those shown in England?
- A. Personally I do not see any difference. When I was in England the majority of the films that I saw were American. I think the same class of films are shown here also.

Q. Are you satisfied with the general moral tone of the western films?

A. I have nothing to complain of in that respect.

Q. You don't think they have any demoralising effect on the youth of the country, either boys or girls?

A. So far as moral tone is concerned it is a matter of personal views. It all depends upon the way in which they take it. But I consider that the stories and morals in the western films are true. They are sound as well as true to life. They are not exaggerated.

Q. It is not the ordinary life—life led by the common people—that is shown on the films?

A. No. It is not the ordinary life. The life that they try to depict in a film is generally the life of a well-to-do man or person of social standing. In certain cases they are true to life.

Q. What some people say, especially western people, is that people here are apt to misjudge the ordinary life led by the western people and think that all the people were like that?

A. I do not think they do misjudge.

Q. You think they rate it at its true value? That is to say, as a mere drama?

A. Every cinema-goer judges things. At least he can distinguish the good from the bad. I think he can certainly see which is virtue and which is vice. I do not think there is any danger.

Q. What we are more concerned with is the allegation made (I don't know whether you are aware of the existence of an association called the National Council of Women working in Rangoon) by the National Council of Women. They have made a terrible indictment on the cinema in this province. A bad public taste has been created, the moral standards are being seriously affected, all those statements are made by them in a public report.

A. I do not agree with them.

Q. Do you know many people who agree with them?

A. Probably the Europeans will.

Q. Why do you think the Europeans will think so?

A. Because it affects them.

Q. Some of them who have been before us do not share that view.

A. It might be.

Q. So you think there is no foundation for such an opinion. You do not think there is any foundation for the statement that the moral standards of young people are being seriously affected?

A. No. Not by the ordinary films that we see here. We have very few sex films sent out here. There is certainly not so much here as in England.

Q. Is that the general opinion of the Burmese? Do the Burmese people share your view?

A. My view would be shared by the young people generally. Some old people will have a different opinion. Generally the young people do not hold that view. The general public goes to the cinema for amusement. So long as they get their money's worth they are satisfied. I do not think they think about it afterwards.

Q. You say that it does not leave any lasting impression on them?

A. It does not.

Q. Or is the poison working very slowly?

A. So far I have not come across any case like that.

Q. Both in your profession and also as a citizen you come in contact with many cinema-goers?

A. Yes. I come in contact with them.

Q. And you are likely to know their mind?

A. Yes.

Q. You don't think they are in any way influenced by this?

A. I can safely say that.

Q. Then you would advise this committee to ignore this statement by the National Council of Women?

A. I would, as far as that statement goes.

Q. You don't think there is any fear of that sort?

A. No.

Mr. Green: I take it that here in Burma there are both conservatives and liberals on the social side, i.e., the old-fashioned and the modern?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you think you represent the old-fashioned?

A. No.

Q. They would quite possibly then come forward to support this cry for more rigorous censorship?

A. I do not think so. They are not cinema-goers. They would prefer to sit quiet and chew betel. Why they might give such opinions is due to the fact that they do not go to the cinema very often themselves.

Q. So you say that it is due to their ignorance?

A. Yes. It is due to their ignorance.

Colonel Crawford: Do you think that there is a tendency in Burma to westernise the films?

A. As far as one company is concerned they are trying to westernise Burman films.

Q. In England also, as a result of the constant showing of nothing but American films, Americanisation of language, and, possibly, methods is noticeable. Is there any such westernisation here in Burma?

A. Yes. To a great extent. But I don't think there is any harm in it.

Q. You talk of the Burmese films maintaining the national sentiment? Is it Burmese national sentiment or Indian National sentiment?

A. Burmese National sentiment.

Q. You are of opinion that the maintenance of Burmese National sentiment is not the same thing as the maintenance of Indian National sentiment? Do you think that these are different?

A. Yes.

Chairman: Is there much difference?

A. I don't think so.

Q. So far as the national sentiment goes regarding aspirations and aims, do you think there is much difference between India and Burma?

A. As far as national aspirations are concerned they are identical. This question of India and Burma as separate bodies comes in only in national customs.

Mr. Green: Can you imagine a national film which would serve the purposes of both India and Burma?

A. No.

Colonel Crawford: That leaves the film industry with the very definite limitation of a province? That means to say a very limited market?

A. Yes.

Q. You don't think a Burman producer can look to the whole of India for showing his film?

A. No. Not for many years.

Q. Why do you think that a good film on a social subject will not have an attraction in India?

A. Burmese films have been on the market for a good many years. The audience generally when a Burmese film is shown is Burmese. There are very few Europeans and Indians to see them.

Q. But you do not show the titles in Indian vernaculars. As far as religious films are concerned I can quite see your point. They will be liked only by the particular religious concerned. But when you come down to a social film, all of them appreciate Western films?

A. Yes.

Q. In that case would not the educated class at least go to the Burmese social films?

A. So far I have not seen any social Burmese films.

Q. Is there no attempt to make them here?

A. Not so far.

Q. There is no detective story or something of that sort?

A. We have a few comical films where Burmese act; but no detective films.

Q. Then you consider that they would have no appeal in India?

A. Not under the present circumstances.

Q. If the production is limited only to Burma then the producer is faced with definite difficulties. In the first place he has got a limited market?

A. Yes.

Q. As a result of this he cannot spend much money on his film. I mean to say not so much money as on the European films which run in India and abroad.

A. No. Perhaps there is a chance of sending these Burmese films to Siam, China and other places where the Mongolian race are.

***Oral Evidence of Mr. EDWIN A. FERNANDEZ, late of the Olympia Cinema, on Monday, the 30th January 1928.**

Chairman: Are you now connected with any cinema?

A. No; I am not directly connected at present with any cinema.

Q. For what time were you with the Olympia?

A. I had 12 to 13 years' connection with the cinema business.

Q. 12 or 13 years' experience in the Olympia?

A. I had three cinemas at one time in Rangoon. I had the Olympia, the Wembley and the Queens.

Q. What has happened to them now?

A. The Queens has been altered to "The Star" and taken over by Madans, the Wembley has been converted into the "Plaza", and taken over by Madans. The Olympia is still run by the landlord, Mr. Dumald.

Q. You were an exhibitor?

A. Yes.

Q. How did you get your films?

A. We imported them from the Universal Pictures Corporation, Bombay.

Q. From their agent in Bombay?

A. Yes.

Q. All along you were doing that?

A. We have been showing their pictures exclusively.

Q. You had an exclusive contract with them?

A. Yes.

Q. When did you cease to interest yourself in the cinema?

A. Last year.

Q. So that till last year continuously for 12 or 13 years you were exhibiting these films?

A. I was only exhibiting their films. Sometimes I used to import some secondhand films; but mainly we sent for the films of the Universal Pictures Corporation.

Q. Where did you get the secondhand films from?

A. From England and from America.

Q. Did you buy them outright?

A. Yes.

Q. What have you done with them?

A. I disposed of them after they had served our purpose.

Q. You sold them to the travelling companies, I suppose?

A. Yes.

Q. Are any of them still being shown, do you know?

A. Very very few, I think.

Q. These travelling companies have a lot of use for these films?

A. Naturally; especially before the advent of the Burmese pictures.

Q. Have you seen such films being shown on the screen yourself, in the districts?

A. Yes, I have.

Q. What sort of effect had they? Were they good?

A. They were films mostly of an exciting nature, i.e., serials, fighting, etc.

Q. What was their physical condition, were they flickering?

A. They were more or less used up and would not give that amount of satisfaction on the screen as would a new copy. Not only were they used up, they were also not good.

Q. How many times do you think a film can be used supposing we had reasonably good machinery?

A. About two or three years; that is a reasonable period.

Q. How many times a day?

A. Twice a day; almost every day, for three or four years, I think. If we take proper care, it may last even longer.

Q. You think it will have a three years' life; shown twice a day? Is that reasonable?

A. It is not too long a life.

Mr. Green: Then it will be put through the machine nearly 2,000 times?

A. Yes.

Chairman: You have 12 or 13 years' experience. Is the public taste changing, so far as the western films are concerned?

A. Yes; the taste for the serials, adventure films, fighting films, cowboy dramas and other wild western shows is gradually going out of fashion. Nowadays the public want to see more dramas, comedies or romances.

Q. Is it so, so far as the educated classes are concerned?

A. Yes, more so in the case of the educated classes.

Q. But as regards people who are not educated, in the western sense?

A. The same kind of films which appealed to them in years gone by, appeals to them still. I mean to say films like the serials or western dramas, or sporting films.

Q. Such people we understand are now taking more to Burmese and Indian films than western ones. Is that your experience also?

A. Yes.

Q. The Indian films and Burmese films are taking the place of serials in the case of those people?

A. Yes.

Q. In the case of the educated classes, you want these dramas or feature films?

A. Yes.

Q. The European, Anglo-Indian and the educated Indian go in for these feature films?

A. Yes.

Q. Did you show any Indian film in your time?

A. On two or three occasions I did.

Q. With any Burmese titles and sub-titles?

A. I am talking of Indian films. I have shown Burmese films also.

Q. Did you show them at any time with Burmese titles?

A. No.

Q. Do you think Indian films would attract the Burmese? Supposing they had Burmese titles and sub-titles, what do you think?

A. They would. For instance, where religious films are shown, i.e., like the Ramayana or the Mahabharata. Such films are liked by the Burmese because they touch on their philosophy and theology.

Q. You don't think that otherwise the Indian social life will appeal to them?

A. No; I don't think it will appeal to them.

Q. You have seen Indian social films?

A. Yes, I have seen some.

Q. What do you think of the Indian films?

A. They are coming up gradually to the required standard.

Q. They are improving, in your opinion?

A. Yes. So are the Burmese films. The appeal is becoming stronger and stronger as improvement goes on.

Q. You think Burmese films are showing signs of improvement?

A. Yes.

Q. We had it hinted to us that the novelty of Burmese films is wearing off on account of their monotonous nature. What is your experience?

A. For the matter of that, I think every film is a monotony. It is more or less the same story told over and over again.

Q. It has been stated that the Burman film producer is more concerned with imitating or rather translating the western films than producing any original of his own?

A. That is generally my experience of the Burman who is a very great imitator in every walk of life. He assimilates the western ideas and only get a caricature of them. He will take a caricature from half a dozen western dramas and convert it into a sort of farce or comedy.

Q. Do you think that is likely to have an effect on the popularity of the Burmese films later on? Do you think they will cease to excite the Burmese public?

A. I think the Burmese will follow the times and take to what will interest them most.

Q. So you think they will take care of themselves, in every way?

A. I am sure they will.

Q. What do you think should be done by the Government to encourage the film industry?

A. That is the most important question. The Burmese industry is suffering from lack of financial support. These Burmese companies are not very strong.

Q. They don't spend enough?

A. They cannot afford to spend enough.

Q. What do you suggest should be done in that direction?

A. I would suggest that the Government should give them some subsidy.

Q. Do you think it is right for the Government to do that? Don't you think the industry will be spoon-fed and may not exert itself?

A. I think if it has a bit of support from the Government, it will have a better chance of improving.

Q. You mean such support should be given for a short time until it stands on its own legs?

A. Yes, it requires such aid till that time.

Q. What about the technical side?

A. The Burmese require expert tuition in that.

Q. Do you think our people should be sent abroad or that experts should be sent for?

A. Either our people should be sent to foreign countries or experts should be sent for.

Q. In what direction do you think the Burmese require aid, in technique or photography?

A. I think in every possible direction, especially in direction and photography.

Q. They show very little action on the screen and there is very slow movement in Burmese films. How is that, can you tell us?

A. That is because there has not been sufficient training or rehearsal.

Q. And want of good direction?

A. Yes; they select anybody and everybody as actors or actresses.

Q. Did you at any time attempt to produce any film?

A. I was for some time connected with Samuels Ltd.

Q. Are they working now?

A. Yes, to a very small extent.

Q. You say financial aid should be given in the shape of subsidies, and you also suggest the people should be trained. Is there anything else that you would suggest in order to encourage the growth of the Burmese film industry?

A. These are the main factors that would tend to greater success, I think.

Q. In your experience, do the western films show any signs of improvement?

A. I think they are improving in tone in their instructive or educational tendencies, in the way in which they depict life; and they are generally catering for the taste of the people of the country in which they are exhibited.

Q. You think the producers of the western films are responding to public opinion?

A. Yes.

Q. You were dealing with the Universal Pictures Corporation?

A. Yes.

Q. Were you in the habit of advising them as to what sort of pictures would suit the public taste?

A. Yes; at times, having regard to the conditions of the trade generally.

Q. And they produced pictures accordingly?

A. Yes.

Q. What is your opinion about the general tone of the western pictures; do you think they have any bad effect on the people of this country?

A. Anything that is exhibited on the screen has a different effect on different minds. There are things which will have a bad effect and at the

same time have a good effect. It all depends on the impression the picture leaves on the mind.

Q. You take the ordinary mind. Do you think the western film can have any demoralising effect on the ordinary mind?

A. Not in the majority of the films that I have experience of. Very few of them leave any sort of evil impression on any mind. Generally there is always a moral ending to a film, and good always triumphs over evil.

Q. You think then it has an educative value that way?

A. Yes. We can see it from the acclamations of the audience; whenever they see that evil has been punished and good has been rewarded, they always clap their hands.

Q. It has been stated by some people that the audience gets excited when passionate love-making scenes are shown; and that they are likely to have a bad effect on the audience. Do you think there is anything in that suggestion?

A. I cannot say so; because I think that any passionate exhibition should naturally have some effect on every human being.

Q. You don't think then that there is any peculiar impression created by the cinema?

A. I do not think so.

Q. Last year there was a committee of the National Council of Women in Rangoon who made a report condemning the western films as demoralising the people and all that?

A. I have been reading the papers recently in connection with your committee's sittings and the evidence given by various persons. The people in the East, as you must be aware, are not accustomed to the ways of the West. Burmese love-making is more or less the same as western love-making; and so when they see passionate pictures on the screen, they don't appear to them as very novel. Of course I have no doubt that in some instances they try to imitate or mimic them, as they would in other walks of life, especially the young people. But the educated Burmese people would really differentiate things from what they see on the screen.

Q. That is not bad in itself, you say?

A. I don't think it is bad in itself.

Q. You think then that among human beings there are different forms of courtship and so the western pictures can have no demoralising effect?

A. I do not think there is anything demoralising in them at all.

Q. The Committee of the Women's National Council say in their report: "The moral standards of young people are being, as a result, perverted by these films".

A. I do not agree with that view.

Q. With your long experience, you don't agree?

A. No.

Q. Have you travelled in the West?

A. I have been to England once, in 1919.

Q. Are you satisfied that the censorship is adequate?

A. Very adequate, Sir.

Q. Whether here or in India? You see most of the western films exhibited here are censored in Bombay or Calcutta?

A. The censorship is quite adequate anywhere. The censorship board is very careful to see that nothing objectionable or injurious is passed on.

Q. Do you think there is anything wrong in the film industry either on the exhibition side, the production side or the distribution side, that needs any correction?

A. I do not know; it is a very wide question that you ask me.

Q. Have you found, in your experience, anything in these branches of the trade which requires any remedy at the hands of the Government?

A. The one drawback is the pooling of the resources of western films and eastern films in one direction. I think that is very hard on the poor people.

Q. You mean the small man suffers at the hands of the big man? That occurs in every trade, does it not?

A. It does. But in whatever trade it does occur, it leaves a trail of disaster behind. It is a question of the stronger man surviving. There are a lot of people who are deriving support and help from elsewhere. Take the case of Steel Brothers, or the B. O. C. or the S. O. C. At one time when there was a likelihood of the S. O. C. coming into this country, there was a hue and cry over it.

Q. That is, they made a fine stand?

A. Yes, but the S. O. C. was not allowed by the Government to compete with the local man.

Q. But who is the local man and who is the non-local man here?

A. I suppose Government will find out who is the person or persons that are suffering and who is the cause of such suffering.

Q. It is a question of the man who has got the command of the purse and the influence that is able to manipulate things?

A. There is no doubt about that; that is the natural trend of events; but the smaller man generally goes to the wall.

Q. Well, it cannot be helped. It is a question of the survival of the fittest, is it not?

A. Sometimes the mightiest is not always the fittest.

Q. Do you suggest that anything should be done?

A. I think an enquiry may be made as to why anybody should try to get the whole loaf to himself, leaving only crumbs for others.

Q. Supposing a barrister in the profession gets all the cases; 90 per cent. of the juniors will have to grumble against the senior?

A. But at the same time the junior will be getting his living wage.

Q. No, he will be getting only a starvation wage. Similarly the independent man will get something here also if he exerts himself?

A. I have no doubt that is going to happen; but we cannot help feeling that one man is getting the monopoly.

Q. Take a firm like Messrs. Spencer & Co., in Madras; they deal with all the groceries. The smaller man naturally complains that all people go to Spencer & Co., and leave him severely alone?

A. Yes, and if the smaller men combine together they will be able to check the bigger man. But the smaller men really require sympathy and support to be able to get their share of the gain.

Q. From whom?

A. Either from the Government or from the public.

Q. Where will you draw the line? In what direction would you say the Government should interfere?

A. You must take a certain area for yourself and leave a certain portion open to others. Don't make this a regular grazing ground. Government make every part of the country a grazing ground. They must leave a certain portion for other people.

Q. Is it your suggestion, then, that no man should be allowed to have more than 50 per cent. of the cinema houses in any particular locality? Do you think it will be a practical proposition?

A. If you give 33 and 1/3rd per cent. to one and leave the other two-thirds to other people, then that one man will have sufficient control over the whole existing cinemas, I think.

Q. That is, no man should have a licence for more than a particular percentage?

A. Certain number.

Q. Do you think it will be all right?

A. That would be better in my opinion.

Q. On what ground would you justify such a recommendation.

A. I do not know exactly what grounds to urge, but I go on the ground of 'live and let live'.

Q. That will apply to every trade and profession?

A. Whenever there is a tendency to control over any particular trade, Government should step in to prevent such control. I am talking from practical experience and I have Government experience for 20 years. Sir Abdur Jamal started the soap sand industry and the bamboo industry. He was not given any facilities. Government ordered that nobody should own or possess beyond so much of the sandal producing areas.

Q. What is the result of this?

A. The smaller Burmese concerns are continuing in their old way. They extract the soap from the earth and they sell it and there is no monopoly.

Q. For what purpose do they extract it?

A. For ordinary household purposes.

Q. And you would apply Government control to all industries including the film industry.

A. It would be applicable to all local industries.

Q. Timber, oil, rice and everything?

A. Yes. All these should be on the same footing.

Q. What is the injury to the public, it may be injury to an individual here and an individual there who may go to the wall being unable to compete.

A. I think they will have to abide by the Government dictum and in the case of rice for instance, Government will have to regulate their price.

Q. In the case of the film industry no injury is done to the public. If at all a few individuals suffer being unable to compete successfully. That is the result?

A. Yes.

Q. Well, is there anything else in your experience which you want to bring to the notice of the Committee?

A. No.

Col. Crawford: When you were an exhibitor you had an exclusive contract with one of the picture producing concerns?

A. Yes.

Q. Is it beneficial from the point of view of the exhibitor?

A. Not quite; but I had no other alternative. There were only a few big manufacturing firms that supplied a regular supply of programmes and the Universal Corporation was one of them.

Q. As a small exhibitor you had to assure yourself of a supply throughout the year?

A. Yes, that is the first consideration.

Q. If you had much capital, you could buy the pictures in the open market for one year. You had to go into contract with some producing firm in order to keep on. If you did not do that you would not have any regular supply.

A. That is the point.

Q. Is there any method of getting over that?

A. Well, if I had the choice of selection from the whole world's output, British, American and others, and had reasonable chance of purchasing

from the small producer, another company would get the best programme at a higher price which I could not pay. Well I would be left in the same place where I was. That is why I have to go and tell a particular firm that I would buy all their pictures if they would help me to subsist. I think if they had a central distributing agency we could get our supply from that particular agency.

Q. Is there any danger to the public?

A. Yes; when I go to the market to purchase a particular film I pay 4 annas a foot, you offer Sir, 8 annas, and the Chairman is prepared to pay 10 annas a foot. The man that pays the highest gets the picture. Thus you are creating a standard price which I cannot aspire to. You are trading and thus there is injury. You are inflating—the price for nothing at all.

Q. How many picture houses do you own?

A. I own one picture house. I had three at one time in Rangoon. If you had three cinemas you would have to get three sets of programmes and it would be necessary to go outside the Universal product and then you start the competition.

Q. Can one independent exhibitor with one theatre hope to exist?

A. Not unless he is backed by the producer.

Q. You cannot purchase a film?

A. Not unless you make that cinema a paying concern and there is a big circuit.

Q. You cannot stand singlehanded in the trade. You must have a circuit, that is you have to go in an association?

A. Yes.

Q. The small exhibitor is bound to go to the wall and he cannot hope to live?

A. It is rather gloomy. But we can have an association and then get all the exhibits.

Q. Then you produce a circuit?

A. Yes; if we get into an association, a circuit of small exhibitors, then we have a chance to exist. But if Government buys up all the films and distributes them we will have an opportunity to exist.

Q. Now then you spoke of the Burmese film and the fact that the Burmese producer has to keep up to the times. Would this not cost him more money?

A. Yes.

Q. Today with a certain quality of films the Burman audience is satisfied. To-morrow it will be educated cinematographically and it would want something better and it would be inclined to go after a western film if the Burman producer does not improve his film. The Burman producer will therefore have to spend more money. Is there enough money obtainable from the public?

A. I think the public will support him.

Q. What is the population in Rangoon that would go to see the Burmese pictures? How much money would you draw from them?

A. In the Olympia I think they had a picture running for five weeks and they got Rs. 57,000.

Q. And the cost of the picture?

A. I don't think it cost the producer more than Rs. 25,000 or Rs. 30,000.

Q. Is that not a big profit?

A. It is only in Rangoon. He has got the whole province to exploit.

Q. So the total amount you would draw from Burma would be about a lakh?

A. About a lakh would be easy.

Q. Is that a large amount to spend on a production?

A. Yes, comparatively, considering the infancy of the industry. I consider that beyond the purse of any Burman producer. There will be no profit left.

Mr. Green: You were talking about the wearing out of films in three or four years. What is it that actually wears out?

A. It is the sprocket wheels which wear out in the film. If it is a bad machine it may not last for even six months.

Q. The picture itself may not get very bad, because it is passed through the machine. Am I correct?

A. Quite.

Q. In other answers to the Chairman, you complained about the slowness of action in Burmese films. Some people have told us that this is deliberate. The Burman wants to show to last a long time say for 12 or 14 reels, though ordinarily 5 or 6 reels would be enough for the subject. Do you think that he likes very very long drawn out action or does he want good return for his money?

A. The Burman wants a long show. If a 30 parts picture were shown he would be prepared to spend the whole night at the theatre. Quick action he likes.

Q. So if a Burman producer had films of six thousand feet he would have to show two films at one show?

A. Yes.

Q. You are clear that poor technique may endanger the Burman films popularity?

A. Just that; the Burman audience wants to see something that is improving from day to day.

Q. You had been in some way associated with this work?

A. When Mr. Samuels floated his company I was associated with him.

Q. Mr. Samuels was clearly of the opinion that the photographers and technicians in Burma had nothing to learn. Do you agree?

A. That is the pride of his own profession.

Mr. Neogy: What room is there in Burma for the establishment of new theatres.

A. You want to know whether we have got sufficient cinemas in Burma?

Q. I am thinking of Rangoon?

A. We have got 10 theatres here. Two or three years ago there were only 6 or 7 and I hardly think there is any more possible room.

Q. The maximum has been reached so far as Rangoon is concerned?

A. Yes. At Bassein they had formerly 3, now they have 4 and at Moulmein instead of 2 they have now 3 or 4. The rents of the cinemas are becoming attractive and alluring to the landlords so that they are building no other buildings than the cinemas.

Q. And from that you conclude that there is a tendency towards expansion?

A. Yes. There has been an impetus in the trade. Formerly there were only 20 or 30 cinemas, now there are 70 or 80. 99 per cent. of them are small theatres showing exclusively Burman pictures and it is because of this increased demand for theatres, in different places in small towns they are glad to erect cinema houses.

Q. Perhaps you think there are sufficient facilities in existence for the expansion of Burmese pictures?

A. Yes; and there is always a supply available.

Q. We were told by another witness that sufficient facilities do not exist, and he advocated the starting of some new cinema theatres by Government exclusively for the benefit of Burmese pictures.

A. I would imagine that this suggestion was made because of the exorbitant charges for these halls in the mofussil. For in the district shows the rents were Rs. 10 or Rs. 15 per day. The rent now is Rs. 35 to Rs. 50. Naturally the exhibitor is at a disadvantage being burdened with such heavy rental to allow of any reasonable margin for his working expenses. If the rental is cheaper it would be to the benefit of the exhibitor.

Q. Even then the exhibitor is making some profit?

A. He must be making, Sir, but in my recent visits to Bassein, Promé and Moulmein I heard that on the whole they are losing after all their expenses are taken into consideration.

Q. So you think that, so far as the producer is concerned he is well off, so also the theatre hall proprietor. It is only the exhibitor who suffers?

A. Exactly so.

Q. Now with regard to the idea that not more than 33 per cent. of the halls in any particular locality should be permitted to be owned or controlled by any particular concern, would you make that a policy to be adopted in future, or would you make it retrospective in effect?

A. So far as I am concerned I would not make it retrospective and I don't think it possible to give effect to policies like that. If we could prevent any further inroads into the domain of the independent exhibitors that would satisfy me. Now I am out of business. But I think it must satisfy the independent exhibitor.

Q. You are aware of the impracticability of giving it retrospective effect?

A. Yes.

Q. In respect of the central distributing agency to which you refer, do you contemplate it to be non-official?

A. I could hardly imagine that to be a Governmental agency. It should be quasi-Governmental with Government rules that would apply to anybody and everybody.

Q. It would be with the object of laying down the terms and conditions as to how they are going to get their supply?

A. Yes.

Q. Are you aware of any such agency? Could you lay down the lines on which you could proceed?

A. I have not given that a thought.

***Oral Evidence of Mr. S. A. RASHID, Honorary Secretary, Rangoon Social Service League, on Monday, the 30th January 1928.**

Chairman: You are the Honorary Secretary of the Rangoon Social Service League?

A. Yes.

Q. Was your association consulted or did they take any part in the work of this National Council of Women in regard to the cinema?

A. No.

Q. Have you seen their report published in the press as regards the cinema?

A. Yes, I have.

Q. What is your opinion about the effect of the cinema on the Burma public? Any demoralising effect?

A. Not to any great extent.

Q. Their report says that the moral standard of the young people is seriously perverted by the films. Do you think it is a sound view at all?

A. I don't agree.

Q. Your Social Service League is interested in the welfare of the people of Burma?

A. Yes; their activities are in that direction.

Q. And you watch the effect of the cinema on the public?

A. I do.

Q. And you go to the cinema often?

A. I go once a week or so.

Q. You see western films as well as Burmese?

A. Yes.

Q. And so far as the western films go, you are satisfied with the general tone of the pictures shown?

A. I am.

Q. And that the censorship is quite satisfactory whether it is done here or in India?

A. I am quite satisfied.

Q. Is that view shared by your league generally?

A. It was not put up to the meeting but I have consulted some of the members of the league and they agree with me on this point.

Q. I mean there is no such complaint as would lead one to infer that the films have a vicious tendency.

A. Not at all.

Q. And you think they exaggerate matters very much in this respect?

A. I do not know.

Q. Don't hesitate, give your opinion?

A. They do exaggerate.

Q. Now do you think that the Burman films require any help from Government.

A. I think so, Sir.

Q. In what way do they require help?

A. They require technical training and technical advice as well.

Q. What is your proposal in that direction? Do you want students sent abroad or do you want to import experts.

A. I think it may be done both ways.

Q. That is send students and create scholarships for them and also import experts here?

A. Yes.

Q. You think public expenditure would be justified.

A. With these Burman films I think it would be justified.

Q. On what grounds? After all it is merely amusement?

A. It would be justified in advancing the film industry here.

Q. The cinema is bound to get more and more popular and you think it is in the interests of the country that the Burmese films should be developed.

A. I think so Sir.

Q. And so you think that Government should take some steps for the protection of the Burmese film industry?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you think Government should take steps in that direction for some time or for all time?

A. I think if Government would take some steps for all time, so much the better. I think it will take some time before the Burmese industry gets out of its infant stage.

Q. So you want Government help to be continued till the industry gets over its infant stage?

A. Yes.

Q. But there are other industries which also have a demand upon the Government purse?

A. Well, those industries are going on as an official routine, whereas this is the only promising industry in Burma which needs help.

Q. And you think Burmans should be helped?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you mean to suggest that public opinion will tolerate such an expenditure: the ordinary tax-payer will keep quite?

A. I don't think there will be trouble.

Q. Do you see the Burmese films very often, yourself?

A. Not very often, but I have seen many of them.

Q. You go more often to the western pictures than to the Burman, I suppose?

A. Yes.

Q. Why is that?

A. Because the western pictures could be followed more easily than the Burman pictures.

Q. Even by you?

A. In the Burmese pictures the titles are too long and sometimes the story is not connected and one finds it difficult to follow them as well as one could the western pictures.

Q. Moreover, I suppose, you as an educated man, prefer a better technique, setting, action, direction, photography, etc.?

A. Yes, and moreover, the Burman pictures are only of a fair order and they don't approach the western pictures.

Q. Have you seen Chinese pictures?

A. Yes, once.

Q. What do you think of the Indian films; do they attract you?

A. Yes, they do to a certain extent.

Q. And what about Chinese films?

A. I don't know much about them.

Q. Do you think if Indian films had Burmese titles, they would be attractive to the Burman?

A. I don't think so. Burmese people want Burmese pictures.

Q. In the Burmese pictures, what do they fancy most?

A. They generally fancy their own productions.

Q. Do the Burmans prefer social dramas in western pictures?

A. I don't think so.

Q. Do you know the producers of the Burmese films here?

A. Yes, I know many of them.

Q. Are they in a financial position sufficient to take care of the industry themselves?

A. Very few of them can command financial resources.

Q. And the poor pictures that are produced in Burma, are they due to want of funds?

A. Yes.

Q. What is your suggestion to remedy that?

A. In my opinion there are two ways; one is to give them expert knowledge and technical advice and secondly financial support.

Q. In what way will you give financial support?

A. By way of granting cheap long-term loans.

Q. It has been suggested to us that bonuses should be given for good films. What do you think of it?

A. I don't think that will in any way improve the industry.

Q. Do you think it will be useful for the censors to classify pictures according to their educational or moral value? Supposing they grant a certificate allowing some remission of taxation or something is done in favour of such films, do you think it will have a good effect, I mean as regards the foreign pictures?

A. I doubt it very much; I don't think it would be a useful proposition.

Q. I suppose you are not able to make out yourself on seeing a picture on the screen whether it is a German, British or American production?

A. Not always; but before a picture is shown, they always name the producer from which we know in which country the film is produced.

Q. Do you take an interest in politics?

A. No.

Q. So, on the whole you are satisfied there is no harm in the western pictures which are now shown and which needs correction?

A. I am quite satisfied with the present pictures.

Mr. Neogy: With regard to the suggestion that a concession might be made in regard to the pictures certified to have a better moral standard, do you think the direct result of that might be to give an advertisement to the other class of pictures which come in at the usual rate of duty? Human nature being what it is, don't you think if any step is taken to mark certain pictures as conforming to a high moral standard, the direct result would be to make popular the other class of pictures?

A. Yes.

Q. And in that way, the whole object might be defeated?

A. Yes, it might be.

Mr. Green: You are very anxious to help the Burmese industry?

A. Yes.

Q. How would you define a Burmese film, a film made in Burma or made by Burmans?

A. I would define it as any film made in Burma.

Q. You would not object to its being made by an Indian or any other producer?

A. I would give preference to Burmans, because they are already in the industry.

Q. Will you discriminate between English or Indian capital in this matter?

A. No, I will not.

Q. You are simply anxious that more films should be turned out in Burma?

A. Yes; more preferably by Burmans.

Q. You don't object to co-operation or outside assistance?

A. I won't object to that.

Q. Either in finance or any other thing?

A. No.

***Oral Evidence of Dr. P. A. NAIR, Private Medical Practitioner,
Rangoon, on Monday, the 30th January 1928.**

Chairman: How long have you been in Burma?

A. For the last 12 years.

Q. Are you a private practitioner?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you go to the cinema very often?

A. I go two or three times a month.

Q. Where do you go generally, to the western pictures or Indian pictures?

A. Sometimes I go to Burmese pictures, but I go to western and Indian pictures also.

Q. But which more often?

A. Western pictures.

Q. Western pictures give you more amusement, I suppose?

A. Yes.

Q. And all these 12 years you have been visiting cinemas like that?

A. I have been in Rangoon since 1920 and I was in the districts before that. So I have been visiting cinemas ever since I came to Rangoon.

Q. Now what is your opinion, as a medical practitioner? You come in contact with people who go to films, young and old?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you believe that the cinema is responsible for irregular sex conduct and the consequent spread of disease?

A. I don't think so.

Q. Have you seen the report of the Social Hygiene Delegation which came out to India and Burma with Mrs. Neville Rolfe and others?

A. Yes, I know they visited Burma.

Q. Did you come in contact with them?

A. I attended some of their meetings.

Q. Had you any discussion with Mrs. Neville Rolfe or anybody?

A. I did not have any discussion at all.

Q. As a medical man are you prepared to subscribe to the view of the delegation "It is one of the major factors in lowering the standard of sex conduct and thereby tend to the dissemination of disease"?

A. I don't think there is any foundation for that statement.

Q. Do you think there is anything wrong in the western films shown in this country?

A. Sometimes I do feel that in some films showing dacoities and crimes and films of that sort which show robbers climbing up walls, etc., it may have some tendency for those youngsters who are criminally inclined to take advantage of what they see in the films.

Q. That is your fear? Beyond that, you have no fear either at present or for the future?

A. I have no fear beyond that.

Q. Have you been to England?

A. No.

Q. I take it that you have attended very few Burmese films?

A. Yes.

Q. Did they attract you at all?

A. Yes, I like them.

Q. But how is it very few Indians go to these shows? Is it because they cannot follow the captions and do you think that if the captions are translated into the Indian languages also, there will be lot of English-knowing and other Indians who will go to these Burmese pictures?

A. I think so.

Q. It is the want of titles that stands in the way of Indians going to Burmese films?

A. As far as I am concerned, I think Burmese films are better than some of the Indian films shown here.

Q. Is it because there is better acting in Burmese films?

A. I don't compare the Indian films to the Burmese films in that respect.

Q. In photography, are the Burmese films superior to the Indian films?

A. I can say that some of the Indian films shown here are very bad in that respect.

Q. Therefore you think Burmese films are superior in those respects to the Indian ones?

A. Yes.

Q. And with Burmans they are very popular?

A. Yes.

Q. Have you ever seen the travelling cinemas outside Rangoon?

A. No, I have not seen the travelling cinemas.

Q. Have you seen any films which are from the medical point of view injurious to the eyes?

A. To a certain extent, some of these films are injurious to the eyes.

Col. Crawford: Have you during the course of your profession, come across any general public disapproval of the films?

A. Yes. There was one film to which Burmans objected.

Q. I don't mean that so much. Do you find the public objecting to the moral standard of the western films?

A. I have not heard of any such objection.

CALCUTTA.

Written Statement of the British Social Hygiene Council, Incorporated, dated the 23rd November 1927.

An active interest in the educational and social welfare of India impelled the India Committee of the British Social Hygiene Council to submit the following Memorandum to the Council for transmission to the Indian Cinematograph Inquiry Committee recently appointed by the Government of India. The Council fully endorse the Memorandum and submit it herewith.

THE CINEMA IN INDIA.

1. The Council endorse the Cinema Section of the Report of the Social Hygiene Delegation forwarded to the Government of India on July 21st, 1927.

2. The Council are convinced that the circulation of the emotional film with a primary sex interest, even if not suggestive of moral laxity according to Western customs, is, in the majority of cases, unsuitable for circulation in the East, where social customs differ materially and such films are misinterpreted and tend to promote a lax standard of conduct.

3. If the Cinematograph Inquiry Committee concur that such films are to be discouraged it will be necessary for the legislative enactment governing censorship to define a "suitable" film as a film "suitable for India".

4. The Council would strongly recommend the censorship of films, the control of standards of production and the methods of distribution being in the hands of the Government of India.

The present system of local censorship would seem to be—

- (a) Unsatisfactory from the point of view of censorship.
- (b) Impossible of effective administration if the production of suitable films is to be secured.
- (c) Powerless with regard to distribution.

Censorship.—Difficulties inherent in local censorship.

At present there are film censorship committees at the ports of entry. These vary in efficiency. A film may enter at one port, be viewed by the Censorship Committee, and considerable alterations made by the censors in the film before it is approved and released for circulation in the Province. The film is then moved to another part of India with the approval of one of the Boards of Censors; the excerpted portions are re-introduced; the film is accepted by the Provincial Board in the other Province without being re-viewed, on the strength of its having already been passed by another Censorship Authority. Indian States also accept the decision of the original Board of Censors, but after the film has left the original Province it is frequently shown throughout India in an unedited form.

It has, we are aware, been suggested that the appointment of a liaison officer between the three censoring Boards would lead to a co-ordination of standards, but we do not believe that this system would be completely satisfactory because—

- (a) It is only the Central Government that could inform all Provincial and State Governments of the films passed and action taken, and could have the administrative machinery to secure the enforcement of its decisions.
- (b) It is essential that the commercial interests in the countries from which films are imported should be able to apply to one organisa-

tion for information and guidance and should receive from one authority the regulations that will govern the type of film admitted to India.

- (c) It is desirable that licenses for the production of films in India should be issued by one authority, and that the advice and co-operation of the Government Department should be available before and during the process of production to secure that films made for circulation either in India or abroad should be of a suitable nature.

Production.—It is recognised that if the circulation of unsuitable films is to be checked it is essential that provision should be made to enable the cinema houses to complete their programmes with suitable films. To achieve this it will be necessary—

- (a) To encourage the import into India of films of entertainment and instruction.
(b) To encourage the production in India of Indian dramatic films.

It is desirable that the responsible authorities should adopt some system of licensing for film production in order to secure a good type of film. There are already indications of a tendency to make use of the propaganda that has already taken place to produce films in India primarily for the Western market that show conditions in India as it is anticipated that a Western audience would expect to find them and not as those conditions are in fact. Just as it is necessary to safeguard the circulation of the Western film under conditions where it may be misinterpreted, so it is necessary in the interests of India to safeguard the production of Indian films to prevent a false interpretation as to conditions in India being placed on them when shown in the West.

The establishment of a Government Censorship Office would enable producers to submit projects of films and scenarios to the Department for approval before photography and extensive expenditure was undertaken. If guidance is to be effective the guiding influence should be exerted before commercial interests in the undesirable type of film have been created, and this can only be done before and during production.

Distribution.—The cinema industry is in its infancy in India. There are at present 250 cinema houses in India and a population of 300,000,000. In Australia, in a population of 8,000,000 there are already about 1,200 cinema houses while there are 3,600 in the United Kingdom with a population of 48,000,000. It is inevitable that within the next 25 years the number of cinema houses in India will be vastly increased and that the cinema will play a part of growing importance in the life of the Indian, and that the influence exerted in a largely illiterate community will be far greater than in an educated community where literature and the press are additional channels through which public opinion is created. It is therefore essential, in the interests of the development of India, to secure that the most potent instrument for adult education should be used to the advantage of the population.

We are convinced that the promotion of cinema houses will be an avenue of commercial development likely to prove attractive to Indian capital subscribed locally, but that it is essential to protect these local communities from becoming victims of the "blind booking" and "block booking" systems which have so greatly facilitated the distribution of undesirable films in other countries and created situations in which local opinion desiring to improve the standard of films shown has found it impossible to secure improvement owing to these systems.

"Blind Booking" is the system under which the distributor compels the exhibitor to book a parcel of films which are not in the country and which very often are not even produced. The large preponderance in numbers of American films on the market has led to the blind booking system, which is an American system, being introduced into most European countries, and

its dangers have become increasingly apparent to all who are anxious to raise the standard of the type of film distributed. Ninety-five per cent. of the films in general circulation are American and 99 per cent. of those in circulation in India. The American film is produced primarily for the American market, and the main cost of the film is recovered in America; therefore all that is made on foreign bookings is clear profit, so that very low fees can be and are accepted, particularly for those films that have been in circulation for some years or for those that have been cheaply produced, among which are often the most undesirable type. American distributors are thus able to book, months before their entry into a country, blocks of films at prices far below any commercial rate that can be offered by any producing firm which has to recover the cost of production. Home producers, therefore, find that when they wish to book films just produced there are no vacant dates on exhibitors' books for probably 12 to 15 months. They have also the additional difficulty of trying to get reasonable prices for a new film when the exhibitor can fill his programme with blocks of cheap American films. It is this system which has produced the position throughout Western Europe, where the cinema is flooded with American films, a large number of which are most undesirable in type. In Central Europe, Germany has brought in the 50-50 Kontingent system, i.e., the Government requires that 50 per cent. of all programmes shall be allocated to German films.

"Block Booking" has developed out of "Blind Booking" American companies, in order to do business with mediocre or bad films, insist on a number of such films being booked by the exhibitor who wishes to produce some well-known film that has had ample press publicity. American companies in Great Britain and other European countries are now acquiring theatres in the largest cities, in order to show their big productions that these may become well-known through press publicity throughout the country, and prove the decoys to the exhibitors for which they will be required to book several bad films in order to secure the good popular film they wish to display. This problem has been before the International Committee of the Institute of Intellectual Co-operation and is now being studied by them. In Great Britain the film group of the Federation of British Industries, which is composed of the principal British producing houses, recommend that it should be made illegal to book films for more than six months ahead or to book a film before it has been shown to the trade of the country. This will mean that unless a film is actually in being it cannot be booked, and if it cannot be booked more than six months ahead it is hoped it will abolish the practice of booking films in blocks.

We would strongly urge that steps should be taken in India, before the commercial distribution of films is fully developed, to protect the public of India from having forced on to the market blocks of bad and undesirable films, and that effective measures should be taken to check both the blind and block booking systems by legal measures.

In order to retain a balance between American and other films, that the Indian market may not be flooded with the films of any one country, it is suggested that a proportion only, of American films should be admitted, leaving the remainder of the programmes available for films produced in other countries and in India. At the moment, as the American films are 99 per cent. of the whole it would not be possible to reduce the American quota to normal proportions immediately, but the adoption of a quota policy on a sliding scale, to be adjusted as the numbers of instructional and Indian films increased, can be recommended, e.g., that the American quota should for the first year be limited to 60 per cent., British, Indian and European entertainment and instructional films providing the remainder: as the Indian and other suitable films increase in number the American quota can proportionally decrease. The increase in the production of good British films during the last two years will enable the quota to be filled with ease by British films, and the development of the Indian film industry will within a few years enable sufficient material to be available for their quota, the proportions of which could be adjusted from time to time.

We recognise that censorship can check the entry into the country of undesirable and suggestive films, but the censor cannot take cognisance of the technical quality of a film. Regulations such as have been suggested would, we believe, in a great measure protect India from being the dumping-ground for cheap, badly-produced and undesirable films.

The Encouragement of Instructional Films.—In addition to protecting the Indian market from the film poor in quality and undesirable in type it is also desirable to take measures to encourage the circulation of films of instruction and of entertainment, i.e., of a non-romance and non-dramatic nature. Probably the most effective method of encouraging the circulation of instructional films would be to impose a tariff on all imported films that would be removed or reduced from all instructional films.

At present we understand that a duty of 15 per cent. is charged on all imported films and that these are valued on a flat rate of 4 annas per foot but that this duty is recoverable to the extent of $\frac{1}{4}$ of the value of the film leaving the country after a period long enough to enable it to be freely displayed. We would suggest the making of a definite import rate for films in circulation of a non-instructional nature; this would be a direct encouragement to the use of locally produced and of instructional films, and would tend to limit the imported film to the large and wealthy cosmopolitan cities where they will prove less harmful than in the rural districts and smaller towns.

We understand that the entertainment tax is at present only employed by some Provincial Governments. We believe the imposition of a small tax by all Governments, that could be waived in the case of instructional and entertainment films, would still further encourage a good use being made of the cinema. This is a policy that is now being adopted in several European countries. In Germany, for example, the entertainment tax is an inland tax, and every individual town council can, therefore, make its own arrangements with regard to the remitting of this tax in the case of exhibitions where educational films are shown. The remission is usually in proportion to the educational value of the film. The most usual scales of remission are—

- (1) The whole tax.
- (2) Thirty-three-and-a-third per cent.
- (3) Twelve per cent.

Learned bodies and institutions in the neighbourhood recommend films as instructional to the Town Council and advise on their educational value. In France there is no remission of the entertainment tax, but the Government buys educational films from individual companies and lends them free of charge to the organisations of educational exhibitors.

It is recognised that such exemptions would be claimed by the appropriate Government Department—Education, Agriculture, Forestry, etc.—but it is suggested that it would be of service to appoint an Advisory Body of educationists representative of the Hindu, Mohammedan, Christian and Buddhist communities and of the Inter-University Board. This Film Education Advisory Board could establish a liaison with the Institute of Intellectual Co-operation through the League of Nations, and thereby obtain information of the production of films of educational value in all countries and could prepare and issue lists of such films as it is desirable to place on the Indian market. The Board would also advise the Government Departments on the educational value of films for which exemption of duty is requested, and supply expert advice to Indian producers. In this way a high standard of educational quality would be secured and the commercial development of adult education would be given effective encouragement.

Protection of Children.—In the majority of those countries where the cinema is extensively used it has been found necessary to make special regulations—

- (a) to prevent the attendance by children at the displays of films unsuited to young people:

- (b) to regulate the lighting and seating accommodation, in order to protect those children visiting cinemas without guardianship.

We attach hereto the Report on the Effects of the Cinematograph on the Mental and Moral Well-Being of Children, issued in 1926 by the Advisory Commission for the Protection and Welfare of Children and Young People. We also attach hereto the regulations of the London County Council on the conduct of cinema houses. We would particularly draw attention to the regulations in Belgium, copies of which are being obtained through the League of Nations and will be forwarded on receipt.

We consider it important that regulations should be made in India that will prohibit the attendance of children under 14 at ordinary dramatic cinema performances, but recommend that it should be incumbent on cinema proprietors to arrange frequent afternoon displays for children in view of the educational value of the instructional film.

The regulations that have proved their value are—

- (1) The arrangement of special performances for children at which films of instruction and entertainment only are shown, the age limit usually adopted being 16 or 18, corresponding with the school-leaving age in many countries. We would suggest for India the age of 15.
- (2) The appointment of a responsible woman to keep order in the audience hall and to preclude adults from mixing with children unattended by guardians.

N.B.—In Belgium the regulations prohibit adults sitting in the part of the hall allotted to children.

- (3) The maintenance of a standard of lighting in the audience hall sufficient to enable the attendant to have a full view of the hall

Oral Evidence of SIR CHARLES CAMPBELL McLEOD, Bart., on behalf of the British Social Hygiene Council, Incorporated, at Calcutta, on Friday, the 2nd February 1928.

Witness: This memorandum of evidence that was submitted to you by the British Social Hygiene Council was handed to me very shortly before I left England and I had of course no time to inquire where and on what grounds certain parts of this evidence were submitted to you. I did enquire generally before I undertook to appear before you say something about that. You may take it as part of my evidence that I ascertained from them that this memorandum was based on particular evidence that the delegates from the British Social Hygiene Council gathered during their stay in India last year. I am therefore, to start with, saying that it is not necessary, and I am not prepared, to answer any questions you may ask as to where this came from. I have read and studied this very carefully, and apart from one or two little differences I am entirely in agreement with what they have submitted to you here. I should also like to state that it is quite useless taking up your time in questioning me about my experience of cinemas in India; because it is *nil*. The only thing is that it is 50 years ago since I came to India first and I have been a resident here for the first 35 years of that time. During my stay in India I have had a fair idea of the conditions not only in Calcutta but in a number of places. I would remind you that you cannot expect me to help you very much. I have resided here and I have got a fair idea of the conditions of the East as compared with conditions of the West. That is the preliminary matter that I wanted to state before you. I may also add that I have read the evidence submitted to you by the Bengal Chamber of Commerce. I asked for it in their office here and saw it. I must say that that evidence is entirely the sort of evidence that I would give with one or two exceptions.

Chairman: I may tell you frankly, Sir Charles, that with regard to the Social Hygiene Delegation's report of last year we have been trying to find out on what evidence they based their memorandum. We are yet to come across those whom they consulted and on whose evidence they based their memorandum. I have consulted the Public Health authorities in every province and they do not support the statement contained in paragraph 1. I don't know if you have got this memorandum in which I see the first paragraph begins by saying "The council endorse".

A. I have taken that view as correct.

Q. Probably whatever general opinion you may have is based generally on that?

A. Yes, generally on that. Not altogether; because my views differ in some things.

Q. I suppose you are not in a position to give any information which can help us to find out who were the informants?

A. No, I am not. But I think that you are entitled to ask for that.

Q. The Home Department asked for that.

A. I am not in a position to state that. I take this as being correct.

Q. Going again to the statement, page 2, referring to the censorship in one province, "the film is then removed to another part of India with the approval of one of the Boards of Censors; the excerpted portions are re-introduced; the film is accepted by the Provincial Board in the other province without being reviewed, on the strength of its having already been passed by another Censorship authority.....but after the film has left the original province it is frequently shown throughout India in an unedited form." I don't know on what ground they based that statement?

A. It is a curious thing that I also have marked that portion in the statement! I did not know whether you wanted to ask any questions about it, but I have marked it here!

Q. Is there any information which will substantiate that statement?

A. I have not got any.

Q. I don't know if you are aware that so far difference of opinion between the different provincial boards, taking the last 6 or 7 years, exists only in very few cases. Probably two in a year. Am I correct, Mr. Green?

Mr. Green: Yes. In the course of 7 years, it is about 2 per annum.

Q. I also do not know if you have seen the rules governing the censorship in Bombay?

A. I have not.

Q. You better see it then (the papers connected were given to the witness).

A. If these rules are carried out I think it is all right. I do not think there is anything more that one can suggest so far as theory goes. These rules seem to cover everything. They must only be carried out.

Q. With reference to clause (c) at page 3, do you think, having regard to your knowledge of the country, that it is a feasible proposition? What is your idea with regard to this?

A. As regards the suggestion that the locally produced films should be sent to one central authority for censorship, I think that the suggestion made by the Bengal Chamber of Commerce that there should be a central authority with provincial boards is suitable. That is my idea.

Q. With regard to the central authority, what function will you give them? Will you agree that if there is a difference of opinion that should be decided by the central authority?

A. Yes.

Q. And the central authority should also be the advisory authority for co-ordinating the functions of the various Boards?

A. Yes.

Q. Therefore, with regard to the suggestions in these three paragraphs (a), (b) and (c), apparently this Council seems to lay stress upon a central authority as having almost exclusive jurisdiction over all provinces. Having regard to the various provinces and also the distance of the various provinces from one another, do you think it possible?

A. I am not in accordance with that at all.

Q. What is the object of the request that the places for film production should be licensed? Of course, films cannot be exhibited in public unless they pass through the Censorship Board. But when they are not intended for exhibition here but for exhibition outside the country or private exhibition, then, of course, there is no means of controlling them. Perhaps, this license is to be used for that purpose?

A. Yes. I agree.

Q. I suppose you believe, having regard to the illiteracy prevailing, that the film can be made use of to create general knowledge?

A. Yes, absolutely; and especially in the matter of hygiene, public health, industrial methods, agricultural methods, in all these things education can be conveyed and I am very much for it.

Q. There are two points in that respect. They are whether such educational films should be produced by a Government agency for a short while till the industry is established on a firm footing in this country or whether it should be left to private industry with such help as the Government can give.

A. I think it should be left to private industry; because the cost will be less in that case than in the case of Government taking it up. I think that private enterprise is generally controlled by men of business who move more quickly and surely.

Q. That is quite true. So far as producers in this country and in Burma are concerned, we have had occasion to examine them and they don't seem to be men of business talents and capacity. Very indifferent people are in charge of this business.

A. Yes. I understand that. But all of them are not like that.

Q. You may say most of them are like that.

A. I believe they are.

Q. They all complain to us that they have not got sufficient facilities now and that it is a paying proposition to them to produce dramatic films rather than these educational films.

A. My view is that if you could get people from Europe to produce these educational films such as you mentioned just now with a certain amount of help from Government that would be the best method of dealing with this question.

Q. The idea has been put forward by some people that for some time to come technical assistance may be given to the producers by experts brought by Government to their own studios for producing educational films. These experts can help the private enterprise by giving expert advice in the matter of photography, etc.

A. Yes. I agree.

Q. But without a studio of their own do you advise the Government to send for experts?

A. No, I should not. The experts must have some place where they can offer their advice and perform their tests. I consider it is essential that Government should have a studio of their own to give instruction.

Q. Do you see any objection for Government pioneering in this matter; that is to say, do you see any objection to the Government starting a studio of their own for producing educational films?

A. I don't see any objection.

Q. I do not know if you are aware of the statement made here,—I think it is rather an exaggerated statement so far as India is concerned,—at the

bottom of page 5, that 99 per cent. of the films here are American. From the information we can gather we have more of other countries' films than probably Britain itself.

A. I have made a note on it also. I do not quite see how they have made that statement. I was just comparing the Bengal figures for 1926.

Mr. Green: In any case this figure must ignore the Indian production, which is increasing rapidly now. This statement about 99 per cent. might possibly have been true at some time but not now.

Chairman: It seems to me that many of these things are based upon incorrect information which these people had. I do not know if you are familiar with this delegation and with this lady Mrs. Neville Rolfe?

A. I know her well.

Q. She seems to be in touch with the British Instructional Films Company. What is she there? Has she any interest in that?

A. I do not think she has any relationship or interest. Her husband is, I think, connected with this firm in some way.

Q. When she made this report last year it seems she got into touch with this company. I was wondering what the reason could be.

A. I have no knowledge whatever in this connection except that I met Mr. Rolfe the day before he sailed. I don't know where he is now.

Q. I don't know if you are aware that this delegation did not get into touch with any Censorship Board in any province?

A. I am not aware. As you see they came out on a separate mission altogether. This is very much akin to the moral aspect of the delegation and so perhaps they went into it also.

Q. As regards this "block booking" and "blind booking" do you know whether they had any evidence of contractors?

A. I do not know. But the statement they make here seems to be a reasonable one.

Q. I suppose it is true in England?

A. Yes.

Q. I don't know if you are aware that many of these second-hand films are obtained through London? That is what the exhibitors tell us.

A. I am not aware.

Q. It is so. The "blind booking" and the "block booking" systems are not so much responsible for this as these firms which apparently deal in second-hand films in London.

A. That is to say, these films come through London?

Q. Yes.

A. I can quite easily believe that.

Q. If you went by the figures of import, say, for 1925-26 for instance, you will find that from the British Empire we get 5,900,000 feet of films, all put together. From foreign countries it comes to 7,000,900 feet. If we went by that figure alone a very considerable portion comes from the British Empire. We do not know what their apprehension is and we are trying to find it out. Have you seen any Indian films in England?

A. I saw one or two.

Q. When was that?

A. Last year I saw two. I forget what they were.

Q. Did you see "The Light of Asia"?

A. That was one and I don't remember the name of the other.

Q. How did it appeal to the English public?

A. I think it went very well. But it was withdrawn after a while. I asked some people to go and see it but it was gone.

Q. Do you think that such sort of films will have an attraction in the Western countries? I mean to say films like "The Light of Asia".

A. Oh, yes, of course.

Q. Will they have a commercial value?

A. I cannot say that.

Q. I suppose you see the posters about cinemas?

A. I have seen only one or two. I have been here only for two days.

Colonel Crawford: I presume that you would say that a stipendiary censor is better than an honorary censor?

A. Provided he has got adequate qualifications, it is generally preferable to have an honorary one.

Q. Have you heard any particular remark as regards the statement that the film in India is damaging in any way the prestige of women?

A. Nothing but a general complaint. I have not heard anything specific.

Mr. Green: I understand, Sir Charles, that you are not prepared to substantiate the definite statements made either in the memorandum presented by Dr. David Lees and Mrs. Rolfe or in the further memorandum, i.e., the evidence now before us?

A. I have never seen the first one.

Q. For example, in the second statement now submitted, it is stated on the second page: "At present there are film censorship committees at the ports of entry. These vary in efficiency". This comes under paragraph 4, under "Censorship". Is that based on the Delegation's report?

A. No, I do not know whether it is or not. It is found in this statement here; but as I said, I have not seen the first one.

Q. Can you try to find out and inform us on what that opinion is based?

A. Yes, but I would like to say that it is rather borne out by the evidence of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce.

Q. We have had evidence on both sides, I think. But, later on, under the heading "The encouragement of instructional films", it is suggested that "the most effective method of encouraging the circulation of instructional films would be to impose a tariff on all imported films that would be removed or reduced from all instructional films". To what authority do you think should this duty be allotted, of determining whether a film is qualified for this reduction or not?

A. I do not know what the Government procedure is at all in this country as regards tariffs. I think that all tariffs are controlled by the Government.

Q. But it could not be by the Customs officer, I take it?

A. No.

Q. Therefore, the rebate must depend on the decision of some other authority?

A. I think so.

Q. So also in the next paragraph it is suggested: "We would suggest the making of a definite import rate for films in circulation of a non-instructional nature". You mean a specific rate, is that so?

A. I should say so. The evidence given in the next paragraph is that if you had a specific rate on films of the non-instructional nature, that would help to reduce the undesirable films and encourage the desirable ones, i.e., the educational ones.

Q. I only want to know the actual meaning of "definite rate". It means a specific duty, I suppose?

A. Yes, undoubtedly.

Mr. Neogy: I find that the Social Hygiene Council is anxious to prevent a false interpretation on social conditions. Under the heading "Production" it is stated "so it is necessary in the interests of India to safeguard the production of Indian films to prevent a false interpretation as to condi-

films in India being placed on them when shown in the West". Perhaps the idea is that Indian conditions are sometimes misrepresented in certain films in the West? Have you seen any such film in England in which Indian conditions have been misrepresented?

A. No, I have only seen two, I think.

Q. Indian films, I suppose?

A. "The Light of Asia" was one.

Q. Any foreign film produced in America or elsewhere in which the Indian is introduced in an unfavourable light?

A. I have not seen any.

Q. We have received evidence to the effect that there is quite a large number of such films in circulation; but unfortunately, most of them are not manufactured in India. They are manufactured abroad. Have you any suggestion to make to us as to how we could counteract that? Of course, so far as manufacture in India is concerned, the system of licensing which you suggest, would be a remedy?

A. What you mean is: Supposing a film of the nature that you say is made in Belgium or France? At present you have got no means of checking it. You want me to suggest some means by which we could check such a thing?

Q. Yes.

A. I cannot suggest any means at all except that it might be censored at home, and if it is all right, it should be allowed to go on, otherwise not.

Q. It was suggested to us that the diplomatic authorities might take up this question?

A. I think they might.

Q. Furthermore, that in case any manufacturer manufactures such films, India could prohibit the importation of any film manufactured by such a manufacturer as a sort of way of marking her disapproval?

A. Yes, that is right.

Q. Would you support any such idea?

A. Yes, I would certainly support it; most certainly.

Chairman: We are much obliged to you, Sir Charles, for giving your evidence, also for giving your room for holding our sittings.

JAMSHEDPUR

Written Statement of Mr. P. K. MADAN, Sales Department, The Tata Iron and Steel Company, Limited, Jamshedpur.

1. I have gained considerable experience regarding the Cinematograph industry during my connection with Madan Theatres, Ltd. and latterly as Punjab Agent of the Globe Theatres, Ltd., which post I gave up last year.

2. (a) My experience relates to practically all the Provinces in the country and in my opinion, cinemas secure a considerable hold over Indian educated classes and also illiterate classes. Latterly the illiterate classes have tended to frequent the cinemas more than in previous years.

(b-c) I do not think that a very appreciable number of children under 14 frequent cinemas. I cannot say the same about adolescents of impressionable age. While I was connected with Madan Theatres, Ltd., I noticed that in such centres where half prices were charged for students for the first house, known as the "Matinee performance" we sold a considerable number of student tickets. It may be said that a larger number of tickets were sold to the students in the first and second classes than the total number of adults in both these classes. In large towns I should say that the upper class seats were always well patronised mainly by the European population with a sprinkling of well-to-do educated Indians.

3. Indian audiences naturally prefer Indian films. Here again Indian films produced in Bombay have not made a great impression outside that Presidency, as a very large number of them related to mythology of Bombay or were only of local interest. The same remarks apply to films produced in Calcutta. Undoubtedly there have been several Indian films of "All-India interest" and these have attracted large audiences, wherever they have been shown. I have a very vivid recollection of the production of the Madan Theatres which created a great stir in Bombay and Lahore, as I was present at both these towns, when that particular film was shown. In Lahore even the Vernacular Press became very enthusiastic. It is interesting to note that the same film was sent to England for exploitation and I remember having read in one of the Trade Journals a very caustic note regarding the same. The sum total of the comment in that paper was that the film should be forthwith withdrawn, and they said that the production reminded them of the struggles of the early days of British settlers. Generally speaking, a drama of about 5 parts is most popular with the audiences. As I said my experience is mainly of large towns, where the majority of the intelligent audience was from the European community. I have not the slightest hesitation in asserting that a sort clean drama appeals to them the most and I have discovered that several times a British picture has appealed to them more than any other foreign production.

4. It is not possible for exhibitors to cater adequately for Indian audiences, as will be seen from the reply given above. That Indian production which created great enthusiasm was not, so far as the trade was concerned, well produced. So long as Indian productions do not come up to the standard of foreign productions imported in this country, it will be impossible to cater adequately for Indian audiences.

5. (a, b and c) Vide answer to question No. 4. There have been many popular productions on which the profits have been large enough. I do not think that the profits to be derived from a really good Indian production will be or have been less than from Western productions.

6. (a) Yes.

(b) (1) Stories from National literature, History and Mythology and topical pictures.

(2) Pictures of Indian History and Indian Mythology.

7. It is very difficult to say anything about Indian troops, as they frequent cinemas so very rarely, the reason being that they cannot afford to pay even 4 annas. Regarding British troops I had experienced a certain amount of difficulty in the Cantonment Stations, where generally they have only one theatre. The films which may appeal to the troops may not appeal to the officers and their families. The films that have gone best with the troops so far have been a few British films imported in this country.

8. (a and b) No. Regarding production work, I will make suggestions later on in reply to other questions.

Regarding distribution and exhibition there are several difficulties. The distribution is principally in the hands of two Companies, who have their offices in this country and in the hands of Madan Theatres, Ltd. Madan Theatres have always tried to secure a sort of monopoly by taking from these two Companies much of their big productions for certain towns and this has led to very unsatisfactory results. Again one of the Distributing Companies, Messrs. The Universal Films Co-operation, resorts to the system of block booking. Having given away their big productions to Madan Theatres, Ltd., for some of the towns they find it difficult to give that big picture to other cinemas with whom there is a contract for block booking. The result is very unhappy and unless block booking and blind booking are declared illegal in this country I do not see the slightest possibility of any improvement.

9. No. The reasons are obvious. The distribution of films is in very few hands. There is a tendency to monopolise in one direction and the result is that many poor theatres stand absolutely no chance.

10. As I said above block booking and blind booking do exist in this country.

11. None whatever.

12. In my opinion this tax has never been a handicap. In publicly commenting upon some of the annual reports of Madan Theatres, Ltd., I have adversely criticised their statements that the amusement tax has hindered their progress by quoting their own figures. I am one of those who believe that there is nothing wrong in levying such a tax for the purposes of raising revenues for nation building departments.

13. I suggest that all raw materials required for production should be imported "duty free" and that instead of having a fixed tariff value for films, an *ad valorem* duty should be collected on the actual value of the film imported in this country for exhibition. At present the Government have fixed the tariff value at annas 4 per foot. The big American productions score very heavily by this method. The big productions come from well-known producers who charge higher prices for printing films than many other producers. Add to that the amount paid for Royalty Rights and consider whether it is fair that such huge productions should pay the same duty as would be paid by any ordinary production. Had this duty problem been adequately tackled from the very beginning by the Customs Authorities a good deal of the evil of block booking might have been averted. The importer must calculate the price at which the film is going to land in this country after levying duty. He is being forced at present to accept with a big production several other bad pictures. If he knew that he would have to pay very much more by way of duty than what he actually pays now, he would cease entering into such contracts. The real work to be done lies here. It may astonish the Committee but I have been assured that a good many of pictures are made up from films that are "waste" in the big producing concerns.

14. Yes. I think the educational institutions do ask for such pictures. The efforts made by the Publicity Department in the Punjab are to my mind an excellent beginning.

15. Yes. In Northern India you have got the climate necessary for the production. The cost of producing would be much smaller as compared with foreign productions. Besides it is full of historical places, which could be used as back-grounds for most of the Indian stories.

16. No. I suggest that the Government of India should have a small studio attached to their Publicity Office. As it is, almost all the Publicity Departments of the Provincial Governments have got a Photo Producing Department. I suggest that the Government should recruit from England or other foreign countries a man of considerable experience of taking both topical and studio pictures at their headquarters. This man should be sent on tour with his staff, a few men being engaged under him for training, throughout the country, taking topical pictures. The topical pictures will realise sufficient value and I do not think that the Government would lose anything so far as the actual production cost is concerned. Besides the services of the expert could be lent on payment of a fixed fee to some of the producers, during his leisure hours. Thus a large portion of his salary will be recouped. So far as the Directors, Actors, Actresses and Scenario writers are concerned, I am afraid all that can be done is that the Producing Companies should import a certain number of people to train people here. It would be a very tiresome process, as is the case in all other industries. But just as Indians have picked up large industries in this manner, they will be able to produce this industry, though you will have to wait for a large number of years before Indians will be able to hold their own absolutely.

17. Yes. Provided there is a right type of Board of Directors.

18. Yes. The Government may also give scholarships to Indian students studying this art abroad.

19. I have no practical experience worth giving, but I presume the cost here will always be less than abroad.

20. (a) The cost I have indicated above is not very appreciable and I think it would be justifiable for supporting an industry of this nature.

(b) None.

21. I have not considered this question in all its aspects, but it strikes me that if you could get over the argument that Government is interfering with the trade, it would be a good idea to have a State Agency for the purpose.

22. I am very enthusiastic about India accepting the resolution of the Imperial Conference regarding encouragement to Empire films, as I firmly believe that such participation will apart from the economical good that will be done, also be politically a sound proposition. At present the argument raised is that this is a back-door method of introducing preference for British films. I suggest that there is nothing in openly going before the legislature and asking it to give preference to British pictures, for anybody having experience in the cinema will say that the majority of films that have come in this country so far, has had a subtle influence of an undesirable nature, whereas an overwhelming majority of British films imported in the country have been of exceptionally good standard, so far as the moral tone is concerned. Besides there is no question of misrepresenting standards of life even to illiterate people. I am a great believer in making the morals and manners of one part of the Empire known to other parts. And I say if that ought to be our policy, then unabashed and unashamed, we should declare a policy of preference for Empire productions. My suggestion for giving such a preference is that there should be a discriminating duty; if it is felt that this is not possible my suggestion made above regarding the tariff will go a long way to help some of the British films. The British films are not so very expensive and if duty is levied on the actual value then British films would be paying less duty than some of the products from other countries, particularly America.

24. There is no doubt there have been several films, which had a subtle tendency to demoralise. There might not be any particular portion in the

film to which exception could be taken, but the whole story would not be worth putting on the screen. In one case "Foolish Wives" I actually carried matters as far as the Lord Bishop in Calcutta through Mr. F. E. James, Secretary of the Young Men's Christian Association, but he failed in persuading the censorship board to stop the picture. I then sent an appeal to the Home Department of the Government of India but that appeal was not even acknowledged. And this picture was most adversely commented upon, regarding its theme and the whole tone in several papers in England.

29. I am absolutely opposed to any such certification. I know of instances where large audiences have been attracted by the exhibitor advertising "People 'under a certain age' not permitted." A certification like this tends more towards demoralisation.

31. Yes.

33. (a, b and c) No.

34. (a) Yes. I have written several letters to the Press to this effect. My suggestion has been that a Central Board should be constituted at Delhi, where you have officers from almost all the Provinces and any question about which the Committee have any doubt could easily be dealt with by reference to such an officer. For instance, there may be religious films about which the Committee may have doubts and a reference to an officer of a particular Province would clear it. Otherwise if such films were to be certified in Bombay or Calcutta and then sent to Burma, consider the uncertainty of the exhibitor if he felt that the film may be prohibited or found that it was banned in Burma by the Board of Censorship. I suggest that all films should be sent to Delhi. The question of duty should also be settled there and immediately after the censorship should take place. In addition to this, I suggest a lady inspector ought to be appointed in all Provinces. If after the certificate of the Censorship Boards from Delhi, the lady Inspector has any objection to urge to any of these pictures, exhibition of the picture may be stopped for the time being and a reference made to the Board, giving reasons in writing. The Board's judgment on such a reference should be considered as final.

So far as payment to the members of the Board is concerned, my idea is that they should be Government officers employed at Delhi. If some non-official members are attached to this Board and the payment is to be made to them, I think the fees that will be derived from the Companies offering their films for censorship will suffice. Besides, if my proposal about the duty on films is accepted, according to my reckoning, the Government will be the gainer by at least a lakh of rupees per year. A little portion of this amount can be set aside for the Censorship Board fees.

41. Not only should posters be censored but in some cases advertisements also. I remember some time ago the Police Commissioner of Calcutta had to take up the question of advertisement in cinema appearing in certain newspapers. I also remember at that time the representative of one big firm asserted that they were merely reproducing advertisements from a campaign book supplied to them by the producers. There was no doubt some of the advertisements were suggestive. For such advertisements I suggest that editors of newspapers be made liable after defining what are indecent advertisements. The result would be that the editor will personally scrutinise such advertisements.

44. So long as the newspapers count on their advertisements of cinemas as an important item in their revenue, I am afraid there is not much hope of securing any assistance from the Press. I am yet to come across the general tendency in papers of reviewing any cinema films on their merits. In most cases reviews as sent to them by the exhibitors have been published without the slightest change.

45. Yes. Almost all studios must be licensed and periodical inspection be made compulsory. I have known of an instance where at one studio on one morning most indecent pictures were being witnessed by the friends of the Proprietor of that Studio in the presence of their lady artists. This

may be one of the reasons for Indian respectable ladies not coming forward to act for the screen. I think a good deal of prejudice against working in Producing Companies will disappear, if there is a certainty that nothing improper would happen around them. I have no doubt that a considerable number of respectable Indian ladies could be found in this country to act for the cinema. While I was in Madan Theatres, I travelled in several towns and I was approached in many places by ladies who were willing to work as actresses. They gave up their idea as soon as they learned that the majority of the actors were drawn from the Theatrical Companies. As is well known the Theatrical Companies in this country are not held in good odour.

Oral Evidence of Mr. P. K. MADAN, Sales Department, The Tata Iron and Steel Company, Limited, Jamshedpur, on Saturday, the 4th February 1928.

Chairman: For how many years were you connected with Madans?

A. My permanent connection was with the starting of the limited company; but before that, I used to look after their work when I was working on behalf of the Associated Press. Wherever I was stationed, I used to look after their interests, say, from 1916 onwards.

Q. You ceased afterwards?

A. I ceased to have anything to do with them while the Prince of Wales was in the country.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: That is, in 1921?

A. Yes, end of 1921.

Chairman: Afterwards you took up the agency of the Globe?

A. That was much later. As a matter of fact I had something to do with the starting of that concern as a limited company.

Q. Is it not older, the Globe?

A. It used to be a small concern in Burma only; but later on, at my suggestion it was converted into a private limited company, some time after they arrived in Calcutta.

Q. You have no interest in Madans now?

A. I have an indirect interest, but I won't say that I have any interest personally.

Q. You have no pecuniary interest in Madans?

A. None personally.

Q. Did you part with them on the best of terms?

A. Unfortunately not. But I may say that when I parted, I parted on good terms. But there was a difference of opinion later on and I thought myself that I should not have anything to do with them. But certain negotiations were opened to get me back and I was asked to do certain things, and then later on the negotiations fell through and our relations became more and more bitter.

Q. Now in connection with the Globe theatres, you acquired your experience in the Punjab?

A. As a matter of fact, I acquired experience in the Punjab long before that.

Q. You have therefore been in other provinces?

A. Yes, I have been in all other provinces.

Q. When did you give up the Globe connection?

A. Only last year, when I joined this concern permanently here. I was their agent in the Punjab when I was continuing the Globe work.

Q. Where do the Globe people get their Western films from?

A. They get them both from America and from England and also occasionally from the continent. They did get a German film, I think, or two.

Q. Do they get their films from the agency here, the Universal Pictures Corporation, etc.?

A. Occasionally they have been constrained to hire pictures from them also, from the companies out here.

Q. How many companies are operating here?

A. There is the Pathe; they are the sole concessionaire of what is known as Pathe Freres. It is a huge concern, and I think at present its Bombay office has been given special agency rights for the First National productions, and there are certain films which Pathe themselves acquire. Then there is the Universal Film Company. They deal only in Universal pictures and the Bombay office, I think, also circulates some Indian productions. ~~That, I think, is the General Manager's private action for which, I presume, he has obtained sanction from people abroad.~~

Q. In your experience, what sort of western films appeal to the illiterate classes?

A. The illiterate classes always went to the serials immensely; or if there were certain dramas which had a certain amount of fighting element in them, some thrill films or pictures having a trend towards criminality. If you said it was some sort of educative story, or there was a certain amount of criminal methods employed, etc., they would flock to it, the lower classes of people especially.

Q. In cities?

A. That applies to all parts.

Q. What do you mean by the lower classes of people?

A. I mean people who go to the 4 annas or the 8 annas. The 4 annas seats would be overcrowded under those conditions.

Q. What do you think attracts them, the lower classes of people, when you say they flock to them?

A. If it is a serial or a thrilling story or some criminal action, etc., you will always find them there.

Q. Do they learn there that the criminal is punished, etc.?

A. I think the excitement gives them new methods. They want excitement for the hour. As a matter of fact, I may say that it is because of that that all along, while I was at Madans, I had been imploring them to stop importing these serials. I had very slowly taken that matter up, and that was one of the vital points of the difference of opinion between us, that is, as to what films should be imported.

Q. Are not serials giving way to Indian films now?

A. Yes, now, because serials are very hard to be had. The serials won't go in other parts of the world. If serials could be produced at a profit, they would come back. It is because they are not to be had, that they are giving way.

Q. If serials are not useful in other parts of the world, why are they produced then?

A. They are not being produced on the same scale now. You very rarely get serials now-a-days.

Q. Serials are becoming unpopular everywhere?

A. They have gone out in other parts of the world.

Q. In America itself?

A. I should say so, because I understand that America has to provide for 80 per cent. of the total revenue in America itself, and with that object in view, they produce their pictures.

Q. You mean in the American theatres?

A. Whenever a producer produces pictures, he works on this principle that the rest of the 20 per cent. revenue has to come from abroad, and 80 per cent. has to come from the country itself.

Q. So you say that the serials are not to be had?

A. They are disappearing; that is the reason.

Q. So far as Indian films go, do you think they are getting popular with the illiterate classes?

A. They are popular always with all the Indian classes, to my mind, except that I know there are a certain number of educated Indians who do not take to them so very keenly, because they do not find the finished products so nice as the other films.

Q. What is wrong with the product?

A. It is very poor acting and very poor titling. Photography they have improved, in later years. When I was connected with Madans I was looking mainly to the topical work and I had very little to do with the production but I have noticed that there has been considerable improvement in the photography.

Q. Have you travelled in the West?

A. No.

Q. As regards Indian films I suppose that some of them—those produced in Bombay or Bengal are distinctly good?

A. Yes.

Q. And attractive to the educated Indian also?

A. Yes.

Q. How do they appeal to the Indian audience?

A. I remember very well when I was connected with Madans two of their principal products. They had foreign actors and the whole photography was done by foreign cameramen. Those are the "Nala Damayanti" and "Dhruva Charitra". Europeans also were attracted. The titling had been to some extent properly done but the acting did not appeal to them. The story did appeal to them. With regard to "Dhruva Charitra" I had to cut out certain portions in Bombay as the European audience was getting tired owing to the length of the picture and repetitions at certain stages.

Q. But then you said that they imported foreign experts.

A. They were not foreign experts. They selected the wrong men, as they were impatient in engaging the staff. It was the first year of the limited company and they were eager to make an impression all round, not only as exhibitors but also as producers.

Q. Do you advocate any system by which Indian films may be compulsorily shown?

A. I have said something about this in my statement.

Q. Supposing you couple it with a condition that they must be passed as fit to be shown to educated people (not ordinary trashy films but good ones) and a quota system were imposed, would you approve of it?

A. In the interests of the industry I would approve of it. At the commencement it will not give a good revenue and the main pictures often will suffer.

Q. Will they temporarily suffer or permanently?

A. Well, it depends upon the class of pictures shown. Great care will have to be taken to see that the pictures are really worth buying but you may take it that western interests will make an endeavour to see that the right type of picture is not put up.

Q. You mean the exhibitor in order to make it unpopular?

A. Yes. It is one of the causes why the British industry has not made any headway in the country.

Q. I don't understand it.

A. Big houses with an established reputation who have a better booking take up some of the trashy pictures from England and show them. When once people take to seeing these British productions, the exhibitors definitely choose bad pictures.

Q. Madans selected some of these?

A. Yes.

Q. You mean to say that it was the Globe that imported good British pictures?

A. Yes. Long before my severance with the Madan Theatres there had been going on in the Anglo-Indian papers an agitation about the English pictures and even in the statement in the "Statesman" over the signature of Mr. Ducasse you will find him saying that the Globe people always encouraged him in importing good British productions here.

Mr. Green: Is it your suggestion that Madans are trying to discourage British pictures because they were in rivalry with the Globe?

A. Yes, and also because of the contractual obligations with the American firms. It was purely a matter of business with them.

Chairman: You mean contractual obligations with the American Film Producing Concerns?

A. I will explain. Madans plunged themselves into a very dangerous position. They wanted to take all the best pictures that were coming out in order that they may have a monopoly. In trying to capture the market they went out of their way to get their pictures. The Americans were eager to capture the market. If they had waited the Americans would not have been in a position to dictate terms. The result was that they had to take along with the good pictures all others. Having taken a big lot, they had to spread these among the different theatres. If they were to live they had to discourage the British pictures and it was in this way the British production did not make any headway. At times they used to keep back some of the American pictures, some of them have never been shown though they have been bought, to make room for a British picture.

Q. Do you say that this state of affairs continues yet?

A. Very largely. In 1920-21 they were very bad. I issued a circular to the shareholders and pointed out what was happening. I also pointed out that they were not accounting properly and how they were calculating the cost of the films which were being shown. Under the Companies Act they were entitled to value their assets as they choose. Subsequently Mr. Pochkhanwala of the Central Bank advised them and after the capital of the company was reduced, I was assured that they were correctly valuing the stock of their films.

Q. You seem to think that the British picture is not shown in this country though it is available?

A. I don't say that good pictures cannot make any headway. They are not shown in the country in the sense that there are not many theatres who would book them. I have tried it in the Punjab myself.

Q. In England itself more than 90 per cent. are American?

A. That is because of the total demand to the total supply of British productions. But the producers have some theatres. There they do not show American pictures. Thus these British pictures have an opening there. The British pictures make their own money in Britain. They are not allowed to make their money here.

Q. You have hardly any experience of England?

A. I have none.

Q. It was only two years ago that Britain started putting forth a big effort to produce pictures?

A. Yes.

Q. Your accusation against Madans requires some more tangible evidence.

A. I am placing the facts as they are. I have said so openly. I have also contributed to the press on that subject long before the Cinema Committee was ever thought of.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: Have you any cuttings?

A. I have no cuttings. But I have a copy of the statement which I sent to the Registrar of Joint Stock Companies. Besides two of my contributions were published in the "Bombay Chronicle" in August 1925.

Chairman: You said about the Indian production that the Bombay mythology does not appeal to other parts of India. Is there any separate Bombay mythology?

A. Yes; those pictures like "Narsi Mehta," "Mirabai," and similar pictures were sent across to the Punjab and there they did not at all appeal.

Q. As regards supply of pictures to troops you say you have a certain amount of difficulty in the Cantonment stations where generally they have only one theatre. "The films which may appeal to the troops may not appeal to the officers and their families. The films that have gone best with the troops so far have been a few British films imported in this country." What are the difficulties?

A. Generally, Sir, they prefer films referring to the Army and the Navy. Betty Ballour is a favourite British Star. But then there was a picture which was very much below the average. Madans put that up and sent it round the country. After this, this class of pictures has gone on well. The Indian troops cannot afford to pay for these shows, that is why when I was on the frontier on behalf of Madans we put our charge at a very low price and made it one anna. Ordinarily the Indian troops cannot pay at all for attending cinemas.

Q. Is it because the theatres are out of bounds for troops?

A. No. But whenever a free show was given them they would attend it in large numbers. The fact is they cannot afford to pay.

Q. So what is your suggestion about Indian troops?

A. Well, give them an entertainment allowance. Or they should be given free shows. But by this you will be inculcating into them a habit which they cannot afford.

Q. As regards "block booking" or "blind booking" do you say it is prevalent here?

A. It is a curse. That is why Madans got into the meshes.

Mr. Green: We have been told that so far as blind booking is concerned in India things are not so bad as in other countries?

A. It is not quite correct information. Block booking and blind booking are different. In the case of block booking you book your requirements from one producer like the Universal. In the case of the blind booking the man has absolutely no idea as to what the picture is going to be at all.

Q. Blind booking is booking of films that have not been produced, not necessarily one that you have not seen?

A. They have done that in the case of Madans. In certain cases a production booked was not produced at the time. It came here after two years.

Chairman: Do you mean to say that they are the only persons who enter into such contracts?

A. The Globe people might have also done that but with a limited capital and with a much smaller number of theatres they walk very warily. I don't know of a single instance where they have been known to book on the blind booking system.

Q. You think Madans alone did it?

A. Yes. It was done previously by K. D. Bros. who failed. But one of the brothers is carrying on business. It may be he does sometimes go in for that sort of thing even now.

Q. When you were in Madans did you have anything to do with entering into contracts?

A. None. I always used to protest against certain things that were done.

Q. You believe then even to-day they are doing it?

A. To a certain extent.

Q. Are you still a shareholder?

A. Personally not. But a good many of my family members have got shares. We are relatives.

Q. I see from last years statements for some months that a large quantity of raw film material is being imported but considering the production of actual films in the country the raw films are largely in excess of what is consumed in the shape of production?

A. That is because you have to throw away a good lot.

Q. I suppose to produce a film of 900 feet you do not put in 5 million feet?

A. The disparity there is too great. But that is exactly one of the points which I took up with Madans and when I was accused of wastage in my department I proved to the satisfaction of my late uncle that the wastage did not occur under my department but in some other department, the drama producing department. It is a known scandal in India, this enormous amount of wastage.

Mr. Green: This wastage exists even in England?

A. But, Sir, they comparatively produce very much there. My knowledge depends upon what I have seen given in reports about American producing concerns. They say that out of the wastage they manage to make up one more drama.

Q. Do you believe it?

A. To some extent it may be true. That is what I have been reading, of how wastage is saved.

Chairman: You suggest that all duty on raw films should be removed altogether?

A. Yes.

Q. You think that will be an encouragement to the industry?

A. I think so. I have been clamouring for it from the commencement. Even in the reformed Legislature I got up somebody to urge that.

Q. You suggest that the Government of India should have a small studio attached to their Publicity office to deal with subjects in Agriculture, Industries and Public Health?

A. I want this attached to the Department of Information, Mr. Coatsman's department. All the departments should be handled by one central department. Otherwise you would come to the same position as the Punjab where the different departments tried to get films for their respective departments and whole thing turned out to be a failure. Therefore unless it is handled by one central agency the whole thing is sure to be a failure.

Q. Then you want the Government department to be a regular film producing concern?

A. No; they may have a studio for producing topical films for propaganda work. When the Royal tour came on the Government could have produced pictures of the tour. Then was the time when they needed great propaganda work. There was also the Duke of Connaught's tour in India. If that sort of publicity work were done something will have been done to educate the public.

Q. You think for this purpose they should employ experts?

A. One expert camera man would do. But they should take care that he had enough experience of studio work.

Q. What about acting and direction?

A. In regard to acting and direction let the producing concerns bring out their own experts. If people are sure that failures of cinema concerns have been due to internal mismanagement and not because the business itself cannot pay, you will find enterprising people coming forward.

Q. If they have a studio they must have an expert man?

A. Yes; with regard to camera men there are camera men and camera men. Certain men do only topical work, some others studio work and very few do both.

Q. If you want a publicity office in a large sense there also attention has to be given to acting and scenario-writing?

A. Scenario-writing will have to be done by the propagandist. That you will not get from the studio people.

Mr. Green: The facts will be supplied by the department.

A. Yes, and then the camera men will do it better.

Chairman: Whatever the experts are, they should be helpful also to private enterprise? Their services should be lent to private enterprise?

A. Yes.

Q. What do you say to the suggestion that Government should have a well equipped studio which should be hired at reasonable terms to people to take out their films?

A. Supposing you have a demand from different provinces at the same time? What will happen?

Q. If it is to be a public concern why not have one in each province?

A. I think people would like to have their own concerns outside Government interference. If they are assured that hitherto the trouble has been due to other causes.

Q. Who is to assure them?

A. Your report.

Q. Failure with the producing concerns was due to other causes, mismanagement and other things?

A. Yes.

Q. Not lack of knowledge and business capacity?

A. How can you criticise business capacity. A man always feels that he is a good business man when he enters into a business. At present what the Bombay producer looks to is immediate gain and he also knows that it costs him very little to produce a picture. The producers have not paid attention to the national point of view.

Q. If the national point of view is not a paying proposition, nobody will do so.

A. If only an assurance is given to the public that the reason for Madans' shares going down is due to the internal mismanagement and nothing else, you will restore public confidence and very many people will come forward to start a company that can consider the national point of view.

Q. Have you any opinion on the question of sending people abroad for training?

A. Well, it is an excellent idea so long as Government can pay for it, I welcome the suggestion.

Q. You think the Government should do so?

A. In the initial stages, yes.

Q. Now on the question of Imperial Preference also, I notice, you are a warm advocate of the resolution of the Conference. Do you think India stands to gain by it?

A. I think in almost every trade India will stand to gain by participating in the Imperial Preference scheme.

Q. How do you say so?

A. India will have less prejudice against her in the sister Dominions, to begin with.

Q. You mean by circulating Indian films abroad?

A. It is merely a feeling created there that India will be prepared to shoulder the Empire burdens by letting in the Empire products into India and *vice versa*. By so doing you will certainly create a feeling of cordiality in the Empire.

Q. Although India may not stand to gain in the film industry?

A. Even then we are sure to secure an advantage.

Q. On broad grounds, what do you think about our small industry, do you think it will thrive in other parts of the Empire?

A. I think this industry has given us an opportunity to make a beginning. Some of our films are bound to go there and they will dissipate the idea recently created that we are still in a semi-savage condition.

Q. They say it is a side door?

A. I say "do it openly."

Q. You think the sentimental advantage is the thing to be looked for?

A. It may be, to start with, one or two or even half a dozen Indian films may be circulated in other parts of the Empire, but at any rate I think it will dispel a good many aspersions that have been cast on this country of late.

Q. By what? Do you mean to suggest that the rest of the Empire do not regard India as a partner in the British Empire?

A. At any rate, what I mean to suggest is that our films will show that we are not in a semi-savage state as we are made out to be at present.

Q. Do you mean to say that the exhibitor there will care to exhibit Indian films?

A. Yes, if they are well produced. I have not seen the picture "Sacrifice" produced at Bombay recently. Mr. Green can express a better opinion about the same. But a picture like that shown in the Empire will certainly do good to India. I remember having read a report in the "Kinematograph Weekly" about the Indian production "Dhruva Charitra". They paid a tribute to the Indian production saying that the story was alright and suggested that it would have been better if the film had not been so long enough. What they criticised most was the acting and the photography.

Q. Things being as they are do you think India stands to gain in any way?

A. If we start from now and improve our Indian film industry I think India will stand to gain in the long run.

Q. Do you subscribe to the doctrine of Imperial preference even though it is not of an advantage to the country?

A. Why, by the scheme of Imperial preference we can bring in British films in more numbers, as from a moral standard British films are far better than other Western productions.

Q. How do you base that statement?

A. That is my own experience. For example, take Betty Balfour's comedies. If anybody could say that there is the slightest touch of uncleanness about them, I stand to be condemned.

Q. Which do you say is the best British production from that point of view? Have you seen "The Rat" or "The Triumph of the Rat"?

A. I have not seen them. I know Mr. Green's Board passed the same at Bombay but Calcutta would not pass it. But then Calcutta passed even such a bad film from the moral standpoint as "Foolish Wives."

Q. And on that account you will prefer British films?

A. Yes. Though "The Triumph of the Rat" did not maintain the high standard, I say, it was an exception, I have seen several British productions

myself. It may be that about 1 or 2 per cent. may be below the general standard.

Q. And you don't consider it a material point?

A. I will put it this way. We have had constant misunderstandings between the two countries. If you allow the average Indian who visits the 4 and 8 anna classes to see these pictures, in the majority of cases, he will not be able to distinguish between British and American productions, with the result that he goes away with the idea that the morals of the British people are bad.

Q. You think they will have a better idea of Britain if they see British pictures?

A. Yes, because their moral tone is decidedly superior. There are no subtle suggestions there.

Q. Do you mean to say that the illiterate man is able to follow the trend of the story seen in the Western films?

A. Yes, they follow the story very intelligently.

Q. And then they have the Cabaret scenes. What is your opinion on that?

A. Don't we have brothel scenes in our Indian dramas at the theatres for drawing a moral; in the same way also the Cabaret scenes are inserted in the Western pictures.

Q. Now would you couple your recommendation with a condition that for every foot of British Empire film taken in this country some quantity of Indian films should be taken and shown in other parts of the Empire?

A. That is too commercial, I should think.

Q. But do you think it is anything but commercial to ask for the introduction of British Empire films into India?

A. British films are bound to come in, in any case.

Q. Then why do you want to hurry? You yourself admit that Indian films are very disappointing at present and they need improvement?

A. I say, British films are bound to come in larger numbers, but I ask why not let them in early, for they are generally pictures of a better tone and class.

Q. Then why not wait till then?

A. Why lose the benefit of their coming in early?

Q. Can you tell us what percentage of films now shown in this country is really British?

A. It is very difficult to give an off-hand reply, but I can say it is very poor. But if you include the Pathé Gazette also they form nine hundred feet of the programme.

Mr. Green: It is very cheap, I suppose?

A. Yes, comparatively speaking, Pathé Gazette is supplied cheap. I might say that Pathé Gazette is more like a pictorial newspaper and it is of good value. If there is anything which is best in the whole programme it is the Pathé Gazette news which does good.

Q. Now about Preference, why do you want to prefer one foreign country to another?

A. I have given my reasons already.

Q. You say that there are several films which have a decided tendency to demoralise, do you confine it to any particular country or do you mean all Western films in general?

A. I have given an exception to British films. I have noticed that even some of the French films are very decent. I mainly refer to films that come from America. Taking films coming from other parts of the world, I don't remember any film which has that tendency.

Q. Can you tell us of any particular instance which you have in mind, which you say, has been exhibited in India having this vulgar tendency?

A. I refer to "Foolish Wives" as one such. I took great pains to have that film banned and in spite of all the endeavours of men like the Bishop of Calcutta that film was approved by the censors.

Q. That is one instance you can give now?

A. Yes, straightway.

Q. Beyond "Foolish Wives" you can't give any other instance now?

A. I can't mention anything off-hand.

Q. As regards the Central Board which you advocate, you say all films should be passed by them?

A. Yes, I advocated that as far back as 1923.

Q. And you want it to be at Delhi, I suppose?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you think it will be conducive to the trade the Board being not at the port of entrance and do you want the Board also to move to Simla along with the Government?

A. I have made myself quite clear in my written answers. I want the members of the Board to be representatives from the different Local Governments. I advocate this for this reason. The film "Life of Buddha" was banned in Burma but there was no objection to that film being shown in India. But if there had been a representative of Burma on the Central Board he would have objected to that being shown in India as well.

Q. We have heard it said in Burma and many Burmans who gave evidence before us told us that they have no objection to that film?

A. They had no objection to Mr. Pal's film which came after being shown in England but they objected to the production by Madans which was produced at Colombo.

Q. Do you think that all the films should go to Delhi before they are exhibited anywhere else in India?

A. Even now many films go to Delhi first.

Mr. Green: Not until they are shown at Bombay.

Chairman: Delhi is not the key-city?

A. It is so, because it has all along been neglected.

Q. Don't you think it will be difficult to get a Board formed in Delhi?

A. If you insist on a non-official Board then there will be difficulty, but my suggestion is that from the Secretariat one member from each province should be chosen to be on the Committee of the Central Board.

Q. So you want every film censored in Delhi first, also Indian films?

A. Yes; but in the case of Indian films I don't think there is any necessity of censoring every film but it is better to censor the scenario.

Q. So the scenario will contain the exact doings in the picture itself?

A. I think so.

Mr. Green: First of all, I have to ask you about tariff. I suppose you are in favour of *ad valorem* duty because you consider the flat rate unduly favours the expensive films?

A. Yes.

Q. Well, you suggest to me that the real value will include the royalties. How do you mean to ascertain the actual box office value of the picture before the duty is imposed?

A. If you call for the contracts you will find the royalty figure mentioned because contracts are registered in India.

Q. How registered?

A. When the agreement is made before a solicitor.

Q. You mean, a legal deed is drawn up beforehand?

A. Yes, and in that the printing charges and other details are mentioned and also the royalties.

Q. Supposing in some instances the contract also provides that the producer shall receive a certain percentage, how will you ascertain it then?

A. The percentage basis is generally worked on more expensive films. If you take the highest value paid for a film bought outright it will be very near the mark to add for it, say, Rs. 5,000. In that connection I may mention that almost all the big American pictures are worked in this country on a percentage basis and I have a grievance here. In my opinion that is trading as in the country and yet they don't pay income-tax on the revenue thus derived. The case is different with the British pictures.

Q. In the last paragraph in answer to question 13 you say: "The importer must calculate the price at which the film is going to land in his country after levying duty. He is being forced at present to accept with a big production several other bad pictures. If he knew that he would have to pay very much more by way of duty than what he actually pays now, he would cease entering into such contracts." You say that with the costly pictures some bad pictures also come in and the exhibitor sometimes find no use for these bad pictures?

A. That is so, with the result that the exhibitor sometimes throws some of these bad pictures away.

Q. Can any cinema house in India or even in other parts of the world exhibit only the best pictures?

A. I don't say so. For that, I might say that Madans are importing such a lot of these American films that they find it necessary to go in for additional theatres to exhibit these films.

Q. It comes to the same thing whether a man pays £10,000 for a particularly fine picture or whether he pays that amount for several pictures?

A. It is the circulating agency that does the business.

Q. And obviously it comes to this that if the exhibitors wish to get their business going they will have to charge higher entrance fees for these films?

A. I am afraid, not necessarily always. I can run a cinema and show a larger amount of profit at the same time never increasing the admission rates to the shows.

Q. Showing the best pictures all the time?

A. Yes, certainly.

Q. Unfortunately not many people, possibly, will share that belief with you?

A. I can prove my statement with actual figures. In Peshawar when I was in charge of the cinema house there, whenever I reduced the rates I usually realised nearly double the usual revenue.

Q. How are you going to finance the extra cost?

A. When the Globe theatres did not charge the public the Entertainment tax their revenue was much higher but once they levied the fee on the audience, their revenue started coming down.

Q. I want to ask you a question about Imperial Preference, because Colonel Crawford is very much interested in it and he is away at Delhi. I suppose your point is, that generally speaking, British films are generally better from a moral standpoint?

A. Yes.

Q. You don't say that one particular British or American film is better?

A. No, I don't say that.

Q. And as regards the actual results of Preference your chief desire is to create good-will between the various colonies and the United Kingdom and India?

A. Yes, that is one of the main reasons.

Q. And as far as I gather your idea is to send out Indian films to various parts of the world when they are worth showing?

A. Yes.

Q. You know the United Kingdom gives a preference of $\frac{1}{2}$ of the tariff duty to Indian films?

A. I have not said it.

Q. You are aware of the provisions of the Act which has been passed?

A. Yes, it referred to the Dominions and so I thought it is not applicable to India, she being not a self-governing colony.

Q. It includes India also?

A. I am very glad to hear that.

Q. And the Act which has been passed states that a certain increased percentage of films shown in Great Britain must be Empire films and you know it will cover Indian films also?

A. Yes, but Indian films are so negligible and not up to the mark at present.

Chairman: And if you read the speeches there, you will find that they refer only to English pictures.

Mr. Green: I am not going to argue with my Chairman, but I can put it to you. Whatever it be, whether you call it Empire film, or British film or Indian film, I put it to you, you are quite sure that Imperial Preference is not going to hurt the production of Indian films in this country?

A. Oh, no. Not at all. On the other hand, I feel that it will help the production of more Indian films.

Q. You don't regard the United Kingdom as a foreign country?

A. No.

Q. And that is the reason why you consider it will be reasonable for India to grant preference to British films as against more foreign films?

A. Yes, I have given other reasons also.

Q. You also suggest that if duty is charged *ad valorem* British films will benefit thereby?

A. Yes.

Q. But as soon as the British films get sufficient commercial value will that be.....

A. The tendency of the British producer is to limit the productions to a length of about 8,000 feet but the American tendency is always to go above 10,000 feet with the result American pictures carry a bigger Royalty.

Q. Do you suggest that the actual censoring, the inspection of the films, etc., should be carried out by the members of the Central Board itself?

A. Well, I thought an officer from the Publicity Department should be an inspecting officer attached to the censorship board.

Q. Do you propose to have a stipendiary officer or officers?

A. One or two people to do the primary inspecting; and in the case of any doubt it could be referred to the Board.

Q. You refer actually to indecent pictures being shown in studios?

A. Yes.

Q. You mean American pictures?

A. No. Once or twice in Bombay when I had occasion to go on business I went to certain studios. I found that certain of these films which had been smuggled into in this country were being shown.

Q. Do they injure the people in any way?

A. Yes. The atmosphere was demoralising as I saw.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: So you think that smuggling of indecent films goes on?

A. This statement of mine is based only on hearsay. I saw only one as I have mentioned.

Q. How can this be prevented?

A. The Customs Collector is the best adviser for that.

Q. But he has not got any studio to examine those films?

A. It is a question of knowledge as to what is coming in, good or bad. It is not a question of examination. They do have that knowledge also. In Calcutta warnings also have been given, say, that a certain gentleman is getting a certain film and please see that you impound it when he brings it to put through your machine. Such warnings have been given.

Q. You know a good deal about the cinema industry. Why do you not start a company of your own?

A. There is no finance. In fact I tried in the Punjab; because, in my opinion, the Punjab is the virgin soil.

Q. What is the difficulty you have?

A. People do not follow me. They connected me with my relatives and as that company has hitherto been not a success commercially, naturally they were reluctant to come forward to help me with finance. Another reason was in Lahore they started a co-operative society for the production of films and the whole thing failed. When people find such examples they don't come cheerfully to part with their capital.

Mr. Green: Your relations' Company has a capital of 35 lakhs of rupees?

A. The total paid-up capital was 70 lakhs. The amount of 35 lakhs is the capital to-day on paper. The paid-up capital was 70 lakhs. It was cut down afterwards.

Q. To-day it is 35 lakhs and the gross income was nearly 15 lakhs as you know from your balance-sheet. Why do you say it was a failure?

A. The revenue alone should not be taken into consideration. The question how much they spend on producing this revenue should also be considered. That is the point of view of the shareholders also.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: How many shares have you in it?

A. Personally I have none now. Whatever I had has been in my family. In my own name I have nothing.

Q. So Madan Brothers have shares in the name of the family?

A. Yes.

Q. Have they a large number?

A. A fair amount. But that is apart from my own family.

Q. You are interested in the profits of the company too?

A. Yes.

Q. There is a lot of sinking depreciation?

A. Unfortunately it is so.

Q. Did your family raise any objection to it?

A. I myself have raised objection. The depreciation is very heavy. As I said before I once asked the Registrar of Joint Stock Companies to proceed against them. It was only then they wiped off half their capital.

Q. For some years they gave no dividend at all?

A. No. They have been paying only for the last 2 years.

Q. And you have reported the matter?

A. What happened was this: In 1922 or 1923—I forget the year—the balance sheet was out and I adversely criticised it and pointed out that the way of showing profits was wrong. The question of charging commissions on profits was wrong. It was because of that I asked the Registrar to proceed against them. Then they gave up the commission and by way of loss of depreciation the capital was reduced to half.

Q. You cannot start a company without capital?

A. Nobody can.

Q. If you had capital you would do so?

A. I might have done so but not now.

Q. In the cantonments you say generally there is only one theatre; because the cantonment authorities give the monopoly to one person. Is it so?

A. If the cantonments give monopolies I would be prepared to fight it out by saying that is illegal.

Q. In Poona there is only one theatre because of the monopoly?

A. No, there is no monopoly there. At one time, on behalf of Madans, I applied to the authorities and General Climo reversed the decision of the cantonment committee and gave us permission. A second cinema can be allowed but the question is "can the station bear more than one"?

Chairman: I think several witnesses before me said that the British films are of the same bad flavour as the American films. The British are the best judges of their own pictures.

A. A large number of the British public has been visiting cinemas of established position and those are mainly Madans. You have heard what I said about the British pictures shown at Madan's cinemas.

Q. You have also said something about Madans going to America and offering very high prices. The Americans are now offering Madans a high price for their cinemas?

A. You take it that that is an exaggerated story; I know something about this.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: May I know something about that? Because it has come out, I ask you.

A. What they said before the public is an exaggerated thing. The terms that have been offered are not the same as they say. Madans are business people and they see to their own interest. As Managing Agents they are entitled to a certain remuneration for a number of years. If the concern is sold to an American Syndicate they will be deprived of that income. Naturally they want to work it in such a manner in a line which would benefit them.

Q. The terms may be favourable to the shareholders?

A. I am not prepared to discuss this question. But with regard to the films it is a different story. So long as they are running the concern they have to buy the films.

Q. You have spoken about this monopoly of Madans. How to break it up?

A. I don't say they have got a monopoly. They are trying to create a monopoly for themselves, and they have failed hitherto. They are squandering the shareholders' money for that purpose. Strictly speaking they have no monopoly at all so far.

Q. So you say the new companies need not fear about it?

A. I have not the slightest fear for a new concern, if it is started on business methods.

Q. In your reply to question No. 11 about previewing the films you have stated that no facilities exist for previewing the films before purchase. How to arrange this?

A. For this purpose stoppage of the blind booking is necessary. If the agents of the exhibitors here book their films after the films have been released in the country of production you might get over that objection. But I would rather suggest that the films be allowed to come in here in that manner and then such films be penalised. The only way of getting rid of those bad pictures is to let them bring them in and pay the duty and then ban them.

Chairman: You want to make them suffer for deliberately bringing into the country such films?

A. Yes. Because they want to trade on immorality.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: About this amusement tax you say it is not a handicap to the industry.

A. It is not a handicap. Madans stated that they were suffering on account of the total amount of entertainment tax paid by them. At once I took into account the total revenue they earned in 3 important centres, Bombay, Calcutta and Darjeeling and found it was not so.

Q. Such amusement tax should be levied in those provinces where they are not now levied?

A. If any province wants money for the nation-building departments let them levy this.

Q. Nation-building departments are so many.

A. This is one of them. You earmark it. So far as my country benefits I am glad.

Q. The middle classes suffer by paying tax?

A. Eight annas, 4 annas and rupee seats suffer.

Mr. Green: In Bombay I have always said that the tax might be abolished on smaller seats. That will not matter much?

A. The revenue from the upper seats will be negligible in Bombay because there the pictures are mainly Indian.

Chairman: Do you pay the same duties on damaged copies? I do not think so.

A. It is so.

Q. On what is known as second-hand films?

A. Same duty on all pictures.

Q. Should it be reduced?

A. If you agree to charge the *ad valorem* duty on royalties you could agree to reducing the rate on second-hand copies. On Pathe Gazette and similar topical pictures I advocate the abolition of this tax altogether. I think that is an educative film.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: If the duty on British films is less, don't you think the Americans will retaliate by increasing the duty on raw films?

A. They are not obtained in America alone.

Mr. Green: Do you mean export duty?

A. Yes. We can get them from Belgium. Germany can supply us.

Q. Do you think Germany will be able to supply the demand?

A. Yes.

Q. Why don't you go to Germany now?

A. It is for business houses, to say. I cannot say. My information at present is that in Germany raw material is much better.

Chairman: In reply to question No. 17 you have said "provided there is a right type of Board of Directors." What is it?

Sir Haroon Jaffer: Do you refer particularly to this company, the advertisements of this company have created an impression that they are family Directors?

A. You may have family Directors and yet running the company well if they are good business people.

Q. What about the present people?

A. I am not going to say more. I have gone far enough.

Q. What help should Government give to encourage this industry?

A. All my recommendations I have already made so far. Scholarships can be introduced. Camera men with more experience can be brought in.

Q. From where is this scholarship to be given?

A. I have already said that if you levy heavy duties you can pay these things from those duties. By charging *ad valorem* duties on royalties the Government will gain over a lakh of rupees.

Q. Regarding this central board you have said so much. You have also said there ought to be paid officers on the Board?

A. I do not say, Sir, that there should be paid officers. What I said was there should be a couple of inspectors and if there were any matters of doubt the full Board can see them and settle the matters.

Q. Will you suggest there should be a chief censor at Delhi and deputy censors at Bombay and Calcutta with advisory boards, say, representing the trade leaders, lady inspectresses, etc.?

A. My experience of advisory boards has not been very encouraging. And with regard to this advisory board how are you going to define their duties?

Q. Why? The chief censor will ask for their advice. Just as in the Excise Department when opening a liquor shop enquiries are made, before sanction is given, as to the sanitation of the locality, etc., enquiries can be made here also.

A. I am not in favour of that unless you actually define to me their functions, etc. An Inspector at the central headquarter can be paid Rs. 200 or Rs. 300. But it will pay the trade in the long run. That has been my view. I surely feel it would be more to the benefit of the trade. For example, there was a rumour in my time that . . . were getting their films in Bombay passed through the influence of the Inspectors. If you have a detached place where nobody can even think of making allegations it will be alright.

Q. You are in favour of censoring the scenarios?

A. I spoke with regard to Indian pictures only. If first the scenario is censored and then the picture is started you will avoid all the unnecessary expense. During my own time "Shivaji," "Rana Pratap" and "Shahjehan" suffered this fate, because they refused to censor the scenario. If they had agreed to censor the scenario those films would have been produced.

Chairman: Who refused to censor?

A. The Board. They said unless the films were produced they would not express any opinion. The scenario of the film of "Shivaji" was written by a Muhammadan. That is one of the reasons. I still contend very strongly that the scenarios of Indian films be allowed to be censored. A trial can be given and if the privilege is abused then you can stop it.

Q. Is it true that pirated films are shown?

A. Not very often. They come very occasionally. They must be stopped.

Q. They should not be censored?

A. I do not think so. The law as at present is good enough. The parties should fight it out in courts.

NAGPUR.

Oral Evidence of Mr. A. C. ARMSTRONG, C.I.E., O.B.E., Deputy Inspector-General of Police, Crime and Railways, Nagpur, on Monday, the 6th February 1928.

Chairman: What is the population of Nagpur, can you tell us?

A. I am afraid I cannot say that exactly. I think it is about 75,000 and perhaps more.

Q. Is Jubbulpore the next biggest town in this province?

A. Yes.

Q. I suppose you know the districts well?

A. Yes, I have been D. S. P. in some districts.

Q. When did the cinema open here in Nagpur, how many years ago?

A. I think the present cinema opened here about six years ago. But we have always had itinerant cinemas coming here.

Q. All the cinemas here show both Indian and Western films?

A. Yes.

Q. Have you got any officer on duty in the cinema?

A. I don't think there is anybody on duty there.

Q. Then it is nobody's duty to go and see the films?

A. No. Under the rules framed by the Local Government, they give a week's notice to the District Magistrate of the film they propose to show. Outside Nagpur in the districts, the usual custom is this: in the city station house we keep a list of all proscribed films that are declared uncertified, and as long as the films for exhibition do not come in that list, I don't think anybody worries about it.

Q. There is only one cinema working here throughout the year?

A. Yes, that is so, the Buldi Picture House.

Q. Where are the headquarters of these travelling cinemas, do you know?

A. I could not tell you that. They come round, give some shows and go away. They mostly show antiquated films.

Mr. Green: You have seen them?

A. Yes.

Q. They are very old films?

A. Yes, very old.

Chairman: Are they in a very damaged condition?

A. Some of them are, but generally they are tolerable.

Q. What do these travelling cinemas charge?

A. From 4 annas to 12 annas. Annas 4 is the lowest, I think. There may be perhaps 2 annas also, but certainly it is not more than annas 4 for the lowest.

Q. I suppose when they go to the mufassal towns, they draw good houses?

A. Yes, they command very good houses.

Q. So, the cinema going habit is growing with the people?

A. Undoubtedly it is growing.

Q. Do you notice any tendency in the people to favour the Indian films more than the western films?

A. I should certainly think so. They appreciate the Indian films and understand them better; but judging from the audience, I should think

some of the western films with well-known actors like Rudolph Valentino and others, draw very big houses. I have no doubt however that the people do understand and appreciate the Indian films better.

Q. Do you go to the cinemas very much yourself?

A. Yes, I go often, in Nagpur.

Q. Have you seen many Indian films?

A. I have seen quite a good number.

Q. They all come from Bombay?

A. Yes, from Bombay.

Q. From the Kolhapur and Nasik companies, etc.?

A. I am afraid I cannot say that.

Q. They are all Mahratta, I suppose?

A. I do not think they are all of them Mahratta.

Q. There is a large Mahratta population in Nagpur?

A. Yes; this is Mahratta country more or less.

Q. Had you any trouble over the cinema at any time?

A. Once in Akola in the Berars, they exhibited a film called "Razia Begum." There was a good deal of communal friction in Akola at the time and the Muhammadans took strong objection to the film being shown.

Chairman: What happened to it later?

A. They put in an application to the District Magistrate to declare the film uncertified, and I was ordered to make a report. I did not think there was anything in it. In the meantime the film was shown for the usual two or three days and the matter dropped.

Q. And it was subsequently declared uncertified in Bombay, I think?

A. Yes.

Q. I suppose it was originally censored in Bombay?

A. Yes.

Q. Then the Bombay Government must have declared it uncertified afterwards?

A. A newspaper agitation was started, and Government eventually declared it uncertified.

Q. That was the only occasion then, on which there was any complaint by a community?

A. Yes, that was the only one. There was also another film, "The Queen of Sheba," and some Muhammadans expressed their strong disapproval of it.

Q. Was it an imported film?

A. Yes, it was.

Q. Where was "Razia Begum" produced?

A. In Bombay as far as I remember.

Q. Is there any other complaint that you have heard so far?

A. No; I do not think the cinema has had any influence on crime. There was one case, to my personal knowledge, where a house-breaker who adopted an unusual method of entering a house and said that he got the idea from the cinema.

Mr. Green: Do you think he may have put that forward as an extenuating circumstance?

A. I don't think so.

Chairman: What was the nature of the novel method that he got from the cinema?

A. He attached a rope to the ventilator and climbed down it into the room. He said he saw that in the cinema. Excepting that one case, I don't

think the cinema has had any influence on crime in this province at any rate.

Q. Do you think it has generally any demoralising effect on the people?

A. It is a little difficult to say. I occasionally see some western films which one would like to see censored a bit more, i.e., love-scenes, etc., which are likely to have a demoralising effect on young boys especially. I give my opinion with some reservation, because I do not know this for certain.

Q. Do students go to the cinemas in large numbers?

A. Yes.

Q. You think that without destroying the value of the picture or without affecting the trade, a stricter censorship should be made?

A. I certainly think so. Generally it is not necessary, but with regard to some American films, it may be necessary to have a stricter censorship. Generally, I think things are quite satisfactory now.

Q. Do you notice any tendency towards improvement in recent films in this respect?

A. I cannot say so.

Q. At any rate you have not heard complaints generally about the nature of the films even on this ground?

A. What I do know is that prudent people sometimes before they take their children to the show make certain that they are suitable films.

Q. Have you heard any complaint from the audience, when you go there?

A. No.

Q. Then you say that by way of caution, it is better to be a bit more strict?

A. Yes, with regard to some of the scenes. So far as Indian films are concerned, there is nothing to complain about.

Q. Except perhaps about the want of technique, etc.?

A. Yes, quite so. Indian films are good considering how young the industry is, but they are not up to the standard of imported films in technique and finish.

Q. That is probably due to want of experience?

A. Yes.

Q. How do the Indian films appeal to you? Do you appreciate them for amusement yourself?

A. I do appreciate them.

Q. You get amusement out of them?

A. Yes, I do.

Q. You don't go there merely as a matter of duty?

A. I get amusement out of them.

Q. I suppose you are able to follow the captions?

A. Oh, yes.

Q. Don't you think they are tediously long?

A. I do not think so; sometimes they are long, sometimes they are not.

Q. You think then that the Indian films have got a great future?

A. I think so.

Q. Probably a great effort put forth in the direction of producing Indian films might tend to create a good prospect?

A. I think so.

Q. Do you think the films can be used with advantage for purposes of general education?

A. I should think so. Yes, certainly.

Q. In various matters of public utility, say hygiene, better scientific methods, etc.?

A. Yes, certainly I think so. Because there is a great difference between a dry speech and the cinema.

Q. It has been suggested that the film may also be used for educating policemen in the matter of traffic control and various other things?

A. I think it could be done in big cities.

Q. Have you got any training class here for the province?

A. Yes, we get an officer from Bombay to train parties of our police.

Q. Apart from the training, have you got any police training school here?

A. Yes, at Saugor.

Mr. Green: For whom, for sub-Inspectors?

A. Yes, for sub-Inspectors. We have no training school for constables.

Chairman: So that, if suitable films could be had for such purposes, you would be glad to make use of them?

A. Yes, I should be glad to do that.

Q. Do the military go to the cinema much?

A. Yes, they do. In fact we have got only one Company here; but in Jubbulpore a great portion of the audience is made up of soldiers.

Q. How many towns are there in this province which have got a population of more than 10,000?

A. Quite a good number, I think. We have got many Tahsil headquarters which have a population of over 10,000.

Mr. Green: Not very many over 50,000?

A. Not very many. Jubbulpore, Nagpur, Hoshangabad, etc., have got more than 50,000.

Chairman: Where do these travelling cinemas exhibit their films, have they any separate buildings in existence?

A. In some places they get buildings which are used for other purposes and which they take on hire.

Q. Are there any municipal halls or public halls which will be available in the various towns?

A. There are some in some of the bigger towns, but I do not know if they can be used for cinema purposes. The travelling cinemas generally use the theatres or bring their own tents.

Q. Do you know whether any of them have closed down, i.e., any cinemas opened and closed down, not having been a paying proposition?

A. Madan is a big cinema man; but he did close down here, for what reason I do not know. It was just opposite to the Buldi. He is not showing films there now.

Q. Yes, I see here one of the reports is: "Owing to loss, the proprietor occasionally stops the shows". That is in Akola?

A. In Akola there is a good deal of communal trouble and it is very likely that shows may be stopped for communal reasons. I do not know why they are stopped, but they used to get good audiences there.

Q. Have you gone into the question whether these cinemas are paying?

A. No, I do not know anything about that.

Q. Has there been any attempt at production of films in this province?

A. Not so far as I know.

Q. Does the labouring population go pretty often to the cinemas, I mean the industrial labour?

A. In Akola we used to get a good number of them.

Q. And here in Nagpur?

A. I do not know whether it is so here. I visit the Buldi Picture House only. There is another in the city, the Craddock Cinema, and labourers probably attend it.

Q. That has been in existence for three or four months now?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you think there is scope for more cinemas in the province?

A. Yes, I think so.

Q. Do you know whether they experience any difficulty in getting pictures?

A. I am afraid I can give no opinion on that.

Q. On the whole you are generally satisfied with the effect of the films on the people of this country?

A. Yes.

Q. Except in the matter you mentioned about those extravagant scenes, etc., you think there is nothing calling for serious notice?

A. No.

Q. To sum up, your attitude is that more encouragement should be given to Indian films?

A. Yes, that is so.

Q. Have you any suggestion to make as to the way in which encouragement should be given to Indian films?

A. I have not thought about it at all.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: Which are the other provinces that inform you about the banned films?

A. The list of banned films is published in our gazette.

Q. That is, you are informed and you keep a list. And do you inform the Collectors of the districts?

A. It is published in the Gazette which the Collectors also see. It is not necessary for me to write to them about it officially.

Q. Do you know anything about the Social Hygiene Delegation which visited India last year?

A. I do not know anything about it at all.

Q. They did not come to your province?

A. I do not know.

Q. Perhaps if they did come, you would have known that?

A. Yes, I think so.

Q. There is no censorship board in this province?

A. No.

Q. Do you think there ought to be one?

A. I think not.

Q. But if producing companies are started here?

A. Yes, if producing companies are started here, then there will be a necessity for a board.

Q. Do you think people will come in to act on the board, if one is started here?

A. I cannot say.

Q. In what languages are the captions on the Indian films?

A. We get a good number of captions in Gujarati and English and in Hindi too but I don't think I have seen any in Urdu. Even in "Razia Begum" the captions were not in Urdu.

Q. If the titles were in the various languages, these films would be more appreciated?

A. As a matter of fact, we do get them in Hindi and Gujarati.

Q. A film would be more appreciated by the audience if the captions are in some vernacular?

A. Yes, naturally.

- Q. There is no entertainments tax here in this province?
- A. No.
- Q. Supposing it is levied, how will the people like it?
- A. I do not know if they will like being taxed.
- Q. If the amount received from the entertainments tax is used for encouraging this industry, how will the people like that?
- A. I do not think they will like it at all.
- Q. Are there many British films shown here, besides the American films?
- A. Very few British films are shown; mostly American films are shown here.
- Q. Perhaps once or twice a month English films will be shown?
- A. I don't think it is even that.
- Q. Do many children attend cinema shows?
- A. Yes.
- Q. What is the percentage, do you know?
- A. I could not give the percentage, but you get a fair number of children.
- Q. Have you heard any complaint about the cinema injuring the eyes of young children?
- A. No.
- Q. Do you think they are harmful to the eyes of young children?
- A. I do not think so. My opinion you must take for what it is worth, but I do not think so.
- Q. So there ought not to be any restriction in that respect?
- A. No.
- Q. Are these cinema houses licensed by you?
- A. Not by the police. They get a license from the District Magistrate. We have nothing to do with that.
- Q. They get it from the District Magistrate or from the municipality?
- A. Before they exhibit, they have to get the license. The municipality may perhaps impose a tax, but the permission is given only by the District Magistrate.
- Q. When you go to the cinema, do you see that the certificates of censorship are there on the films?
- A. They always display them.
- Q. Have you come across any which did not have the certificate?
- A. I cannot remember any instance in which it was not shown.
- Q. You don't make it a point to see that?
- A. No.
- Mr. Green: You said there was only one cinema here?
- A. Two, the Buldi and the Craddock.
- Q. But it is shown in a statement I have here that there are the Raghuvir, the Tulasiram Theatre, etc.?
- A. They are all seasonal, I think.
- Q. Do you know whether the travelling cinemas have to take out licenses at each place where they show?
- A. I am afraid I cannot say.
- Q. Can you tell us whether the really uneducated classes go and see the cinemas?
- A. They do; it is an evening's *tamasha* with them, and they crowd to it.
- Q. And they are quite prepared to spend Annas 4 over it?
- A. Oh, yes.
- Q. Are wages high in this province?

- A. Yes, in Berar in the cotton districts, they are very high.
- Q. You told the Chairman that you are generally satisfied with the films, but that certain scenes might affect the adolescents?
- A. Yes.
- Q. I take it that you consider that the broadening effect of seeing scenes to which they are not accustomed, i.e., western buildings, aeroplanes, etc., is good?
- A. Yes.
- Q. And as long as there are reasonable safeguards against suggestive scenes, the cinema is definitely doing good?
- A. Yes, that is my opinion.

***Oral Evidence of Mr. F. J. PLYMEN, A.G.G.I., Director of Agriculture, Nagpur, on Monday, the 6th February 1928.**

Chairman: You are the Director of Agriculture in this province?

- A. Yes.
- Q. Do you do much propaganda work in your department?
- A. A very great amount.
- Q. Do you include visual instruction in that category?
- A. Yes, at present only with magic lantern slides.
- Q. Do you get them made here locally?
- A. Yes, we have an artist. May I make a statement which explains my position. Looking through the questionnaire, I found there were only two questions on which I thought I could give any useful information. There is question No. 14 which relates to the use of the cinema for propaganda work.
- We have a staff of 100 men moving about the province doing propaganda work amongst agriculturists and I am quite sure that with them propaganda has had effect from an educational point of view. I have a scheme in view for using the cinema for that purpose. In my budget proposals for the ensuing year I have asked to be supplied with five travelling carriages for each division, each carrying a cinema and demonstration placards, charts, diagrams pictures showing specimens of grain of different varieties and they should go right round the country. The Advisory Board on Agriculture has strongly supported this. The finances are not sufficient. I have provisional sanction for one and I am hoping with experience that that one will be of considerable value and we should be able to go further ahead. My intention is not to confine the cinema to the use of the Agricultural department only. It should be used for the Public Health department, for the Educational department, for the Co-operative department and the Department of Industries and every other department.

At present my proposals are almost entirely on paper but there is no doubt that these will be of very very great benefit to the rural population. We have here good roads but we have not good railways. I propose to utilise the roads. I hope I am not talking too much. There are proposals also for using the cinema cars on the railways.

As regards films, they are available here to some extent. We have in this province arranged with the Government of India for films dealing with cotton growing, wheat growing and so on. They were made by my own department in this Province. We have experience in this Province in making films. The Agricultural Institute at Pusa has also taken up these.—The film on cotton marketing. I have not seen the film yet. It was taken up just at the end of last year.

These films which we have produced have been shown by the Railway authorities and they run a cinema car up and down the line. We attach one of our assistants who describes the pictures as they are shown, translates the captions, if necessary, and keeps up a running commentary. He is a demonstrator who can speak the language of the people fluently, but, what is more important, he is not a mere lecturer but he is a man who can give agricultural advice and can answer further questions put to him. I believe I have never myself lectured for the cinema. It wants a certain amount of training, but apart from lectures, our technical advisers can go a little further by giving supplementary information if required.

I don't think that scheme of confining it to the railways sufficient, because you are teaching only the railway population and a good many of the films shown this way do not appeal much to the rural inhabitants. They appeal to the people on the railway station alone. Probably the cinema train may be good to begin with. It is very limited in its scope. We want to get away from the railways. So we are now using motor lorries for this purpose.

A little while ago a proposal came that we should fit up a demonstration train which they have got in the Punjab and give certain cinema demonstrations within its scope. To my mind this does not at all meet the question. After all if you take this railway you can run from Bhusaval to Nagpur—the cotton tract. The G. I. P. Railway, practically running through jungles, cannot possibly teach the agricultural tract. This will mean that the appliances will have to be refitted. Although the train is useful it does not go far enough.

I don't think we have enough films here. I don't know whether you are acquainted with this American publication (witness handed some pamphlets to the Chairman) put up by the American department of Agriculture. I think it was prepared for the department by the Manure Cos. for propaganda work. I think it is quite good.

Q. Do you think foreign films will be useful for this purpose?

A. I would introduce a few foreign films because of their educational value. I remember we had a cinema here with foreign films. One of my senior officers had seen it. But I had no conception that agriculture in other countries had developed like that. The film I refer to was of a cattle show. It was a very great educative film.

Q. If you want to make education more effective you will have to reproduce local conditions?

A. Yes. Personally, if I were conducting a cinema show, to make it attractive to the villagers I should have two films, one for cotton cultivation and the other a general educational film, and also a humorous comic.

Q. Adding amusement?

A. In that particular manner.

Q. Your Government have thought about all these things. The difficulty is you are not independently able to bring about what you want?

A. I am afraid the getting of the films is rather difficult. But I have enquired about that film—the film on cotton growing—and they charge 8 annas a foot for duplicates.

Q. The positive of film was made by the railway company?

A. Yes, we give the supervision.

Q. They made it at their own cost?

A. Yes.

Q. You can get copies at 8 annas a foot?

A. Yes, in view of the assistance we have given. They are prepared to give it now at 5 annas.

Q. They will definitely give them to you for 5 annas a foot, for Government departments.

A. They are hardly sufficient to keep the thing going. The Pusa Institute film we can get. But I think we want a good deal of technical knowledge in producing the film. Photographers are not necessarily film producers.

Q. Would you have a central studio for all-India where you can make these public utility films, which will employ the necessary number of experts in direction, photography and other things, and all provinces could indent upon that agency both for production and other co-ordinating work?

A. I think that would be a very good idea.

Q. It does not necessarily mean that the central studio will be confined to one spot. They can send out photographers to produce local films?

A. Yes.

Q. You wouldn't have any objection to co-operating with the Central Government in having a general studio.

A. No, I would even go still further and say that Provincial contribution also should be given to it.

Q. Have you found any difficulty among the people in following the films. It was said that magic lantern slides would be more attractive?

A. I don't think so. I think that the slow motion picture is everything from the educational point of view.

Q. Your definite information is that the film is more effective than the magic lantern?

A. Yes. we do still get good audiences in the villages even for magic lantern shows. I was surprised at times at the crowd that our shows were drawing considering the conditions, the hot day with all the windows shut, etc. With the cinema you should be able to get much bigger audiences. As regards educational matters I don't think there can be any comparison between the magic lantern and the cinema.

Q. I suppose in the Central Provinces the people are more or less familiar with conditions in the Bombay province?

A. On the western side of course.

Q. Bombay and the Central Provinces will certainly co-operate?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you go the cinema very much?

A. Yes. I am fond of the cinema.

Q. Have you seen Indian films?

A. One or two of them.

Q. Do you think it will be possible for each Provincial Government to have its own studio?

A. I don't think it is necessary.

Q. The work will be duplicated unnecessarily?

A. Yes.

Q. So long as a sufficient number of copies can be had for circulation you think it will be more economical to have a central studio?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you think there will be any practical difficulty in the heads of departments co-operating and collaborating for this purpose?

A. I don't think so.

Q. We are talking of course educationally.

A. I don't think there will be any great difficulty. After all one wants to widen the outlook of the people and show them something which is going on outside the borders of their own province.

Q. It was definitely stated in Bengal that anything which is not Bengali in its outlook and conditions they did not want in Bengal. I think it was in the case of malaria films. I think it was said that unless the Bengal fields

and Bengal rivers were shown they would focuss their attention on the in-different matters of new scenery and dress and care more for that than for the subject matter. Do you think there is any such thing here?

A. Of course there are differences in all provinces. The system of rice cultivation in Chhatisgarh is quite different from that in Nagpur. To show them their methods I think there should be a difference in the different films.

Q. From your experience you think this provincialisation need not be taken into account.

A. No, I don't think so. I do not know what action the Agricultural Commission is going to take in regard to this matter. They are possibly making some recommendations in this regard.

Q. I suppose you go to the cinema in Nagpur?

A. I go occasionally. The man who is running the show here is known to me. For the benefit of the members of the Local Council, he was kind enough to show our film on cattle breeding.

Q. What is your opinion as regards the effect of the cinema generally on the public? I do not mean educational films?

A. To a certain extent it has a disturbing effect. It makes the lower classes a little restless and discontented.

Q. You mean they get more ideas of life?

A. Yes, I once went to see a film in the Buldi cinema. It was an English film. It was the best film which I have seen for a long time. It was a good, clean, vigorous film. I paid my servant 8 annas and asked him to witness the picture. After seeing it he told me that he was going to see it once again because there were good girls in it and he was waiting for his pay day. I find that through my sending him to the cinema he is wasting his money. But of course the novelty wears off soon.

Q. It widens their outlook and their ideas of life and on the whole it has a good tendency?

A. Yes, I think it has.

Q. It has a healthy influence?

A. My barber who goes to the cinema sees life in other parts like his own. After seeing the cinema he wanted to go to Bombay to open a hair cutting saloon there. This is the sort of disturbing effect, partly also widening their outlook.

Q. As all new things do, the cinema produces a healthy disturbance?

A. It does, I think.

Q. You have no other comment to make?

A. From what I have seen there are a good many films which could appeal to the people.

Q. Do they appreciate good films.

A. They do appreciate good films. The attendance would not fall if we do away with the film depicting the lower side of life. They love clever horsemanship, sports, athletics. They seem to enjoy them.

Q. Would you leave it to time or is any drastic action required?

A. Perhaps a little more censorship would be an advantage. Some of the films, one does not know how they got in. I think some films would be better not shown.

Q. That is where sex is coming in?

A. I would be inclined to cut out nude figures and things like that. It is being done now but stricter censorship is needed on general grounds.

Q. Not because of any particular effect upon this country or in any other country?

A. On general grounds, I think.

Q. How are you financially placed? Supposing you had to run your own studio, would be able to do that?

A. Certainly not, departmentally.

Q. Different departments could pool their resources? It would be more effective to have combined effort?

A. I should much prefer a central organisation and to pay a quota to it than to try to run a different one here.

Q. Better experts are very costly and you think the combined effort would not be practicable?

A. I think if we had at the present time some 20 or 30 films we should have something really worth going on. We do not want a big selection. From my own point of view I think we do not want films which would take the whole time of an expert. I would try to get my man to take the camera and learn the technique somewhere else instead of getting an expert here.

Mr. Green: What approximately would the cost of the scheme of lorries work out at?

A. It is about Rs. 10,000 per lorry. This is the capital cost and the running expenses would come to about Rs. 1,000 a year.

Q. Not including the money on new films?

A. No. You would not get many new films. When I put the scheme down I thought it would be Rs. 5,000, for running charges. But now I have sanction for one lorry and the running charges I think would be more than Rs. 3,000.

Q. You have provisional sanction for one lorry and the cost of that?

A. Is about Rs. 10,000.

Chairman: I take it therefore that your Government approves of the general idea.

A. Yes. My advisory Board on Agriculture, they are enthusiastic over it because they have to find the money. In the Finance Department they said they cannot give all that we wanted. They passed it to the extent of one lorry as a trial.

Mr. Green: We have in evidence that almost every Local Government has put down a certain amount of money for similar purposes and the results are not always commensurate with the amount spent.

A. That is because the work is distributed in several departments. I have put down nothing for any organisation for making films.

Q. How much is your department likely to give for making films, or alternatively to support a Central Agency?

A. My own department and the others have not put down anything at all in this direction.

Q. You refer to the films made at Bombay and the Pusa films. Have you seen the films yourself?

A. I have seen a good many of them.

Q. What would you say is the weakest part of them? You are reasonably satisfied with the photography, or could it be improved?

A. Of course the film I saw was one that was produced at Pusa. It was the first effort. It was not particularly good. They themselves admitted this. I should say in the other films, the technique and the composition are not quite the same as they are in professional films. It is a good collection of films put on a string. There is not the professional finish. That is why you are in favour of a Central Studio?

A. Yes, after all it is a professional business.

Q. There being differences in the various methods employed, etc., in the different provinces, do you think for example, an agricultural film prepared in Nagpur would be suitable for exhibition in other provinces such as Madras, Bombay or the Punjab?

A. I think some of them may be suitable but I would criticise the present scheme, e.g., to show a picture showing the production of sugar-cane in a district where there is no hope of producing sugar-cane at all. I think that

should not be done. A film showing wheat production would probably be of advantage and that could be shown in a good many parts of India.

Q. What you really want is to have these films produced not necessarily on a provincial basis, but on a subject basis and on an agricultural tract basis?

A. Yes.

Q. And that will be a further argument in favour of a Central agency, I suppose?

A. Yes, quite.

Q. It has been represented to us that if Government institute a studio or studios, they will be competing unfairly with the Indian producers, of whom there are a good many in Bombay, Calcutta and Rangoon. Have you ever tried to get your films prepared through these private producers?

A. I did not discover any local firm doing film production work. I think it would be much better for Government itself to undertake preparation of Educational films, etc. But if a private firm is asked to do the work, then Government officers will have to collaborate with them very much.

Q. Well, if Government officers in the departments could give directions and say that they want such and such films, then these producers could do the actual photography, continuity, printing, developing of films, etc.?

A. Well, we have difficulty in that sort of thing. I, however, think that it will be a very expensive business to run the studio merely for the production of a few films like that.

Q. If you had a sufficiently efficient private company who would do the business for you at a reasonable rate, I imagine you will have no objection to that proposal?

A. Oh, no. Not in the least.

Chairman: To your knowledge, what do you think of the film production in this country?

A. I have no personal knowledge of film industry in this country.

Mr. Green: You talk about the disturbing effect of the Cinema. I suppose you are referring to the disturbing passion scenes, etc.?

A. Yes.

Q. I suppose you agree that the cinema may make ignorant people think and excite their feelings, thereby and enlighten them and raise the standard of living, possibly?

A. Yes, certainly. The people in this Province, especially, have known what exactly agriculture in other parts of the country and the world in general, is, only through the cinemas shown here.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: Is that lorry which you have got, in working order now?

A. Provision has been made for it and we won't get it until next March.

Q. How are you utilising these travelling cinemas in this province. Do you send out your demonstrators to show your pictures?

A. We don't know how many travelling cinemas there are at present. We had a proposal a short time ago from a firm which called itself "The Central Provinces Village Touring Cinema". They tour throughout the province taking their plant, etc., in bullock carts. They wanted to know whether they could use some of our films for exhibition to the villagers. They charged us about Rs. 120 per mensem for a minimum of 15 shows.

Q. They would not show your films free?

A. Here is the proposal which we had from them. (Hands over the copy of the correspondence to the Chairman).

Chairman: It is better that you give us a copy of this correspondence?

A. Yes, I will forward a copy of that correspondence for the information of the Committee.

Q. Do you make any condition about the efficiency of the operator?

A. We had to send out our Demonstrator to explain the films.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: So do you think it will be a good thing if a condition is inserted in the license that Government educational films should be shown free of charge if Government supplied them?

A. I think it will be rather hard on them. Government should be prepared to pay them something.

Q. Would you prefer to have a Board in this Province to advise Government with regard to the encouragement of the Cinema industry in this province?

A. We have already got a Board of Industries, and a Board which combines Agriculture, Veterinary and Co-operative Credit, etc.

Q. Do you know the composition of the different Boards of Censors in the different provinces?

A. No, I don't know it at all.

Q. You said that some stricter censorship ought to be done, of the films now shown in this country?

A. That is my private view as a Cinema-goer.

Q. What are your suggestions to make it stricter?

A. I only think that some of the films now shown should be censored more strictly.

Q. Do you want the composition of the Board to be bettered?

A. I have no complaint about the composition of the Board, but I want them to take a different standard, that is all.

Q. You told us that you asked for 5 lorries and you got one, particularly because it is an experiment?

A. Yes.

Q. Then will it be possible for the Government to supply you the remaining four which you asked for?

A. I suppose so, if they have sufficient money.

Q. Have you Race-courses in this province?

A. Not recognised ones, I think.

Q. I suppose you have plenty of theatres also?

A. No, not many of them.

Q. You know that there is an entertainment tax in Bombay and Bengal?

A. Yes.

Q. If such a tax is imposed here, do you think sufficient money will come in to meet your demands?

A. I don't see why a small amusement tax should not be imposed.

Chairman: But do you think you will have a large income thereby?

A. I don't think so.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: In Jubbulpore, you have a race-course, I think?

A. There may be a small one.

A. Do you think these posters and advertisements should also be censored?

A. Yes, they should be, if there is anything objectionable about them.

Oral Evidence of Mr. C. M. TRIYEDI, I.C.S., Director of Industries, and Registrar, Co-operative Societies, Nagpur, on Monday, the 6th February 1928.

Chairman: You are the Director of Industries?

A. Yes, Sir.

Q. I suppose you have had very little work in connection with the Cinema in this Province?

A. I have had practically no work in connection with Cinemas in this province. There is no film production in this province nor is there any likelihood of that industry springing up in this province for a long time to come.

Q. Why is it so? Are not Indian films popular here?

A. Indian films are, no doubt, popular here, but capital in this province is very shy and it won't come into the film industry, for all capital is generally invested in familiar industries, e.g., cotton ginning and pressing factories, etc.

Q. Do you think there is any scope for the development of the Cinema industry in this province? Apart from this shyness is there any local condition which is not favourable to the film industry?

A. I don't think we have a sufficiently wide market for films. There are only about 15 permanent Cinemas and about 10 travelling cinema companies in this province.

Q. Have you got a record of the cinemas in this province?

A. My department gets the information because the Electrical Inspector has to inspect the theatres. There were 16 permanent cinemas, but I believe, one has since closed down, for a letter which I addressed to the manager of one of the cinemas has been returned to me. To be precise, I think there are 15 permanent and 11 travelling cinemas in this province.

Q. Some of these permanent cinemas show only in certain seasons, I believe?

A. I suppose they are showing all the year round; most of them at any rate.

Q. I don't know whether you have seen this list. This is the list supplied to us by the Government. I find from it that some of the cinemas are shown as seasonal ones?

A. Yes, there are slight differences between the two lists as I now see.

Q. I suppose your list must be more up to date?

A. I think so.

Q. Would you kindly send us a copy of your list also, as it is more up to date, and noting against each whether they are open throughout the year or not?

A. Yes, I shall send you a list. I think, probably, one or two of them may be seasonal but the vast majority of them run throughout the year.

Q. Is the cinema going habit growing among the people in this province?

A. Yes, I think so.

Q. Do you move about the province much?

A. Yes, I do.

Q. And you have seen these travelling cinemas?

A. No, I have not seen them at all.

Q. You don't know what sort of films are shown by these travelling cinemas?

A. I don't know it myself.

Q. In the districts, have you any idea about the nature of the films shown? Are they Western and Indian and if so what sort of Western pictures?

A. I think they are mostly showing Indian films and a few Western pictures. Mostly Indian films of historical and mythological interest are generally shown.

Q. Do they get sufficient Indian pictures to show all the year round?

A. Yes, I think so. They get their pictures from Bombay. For example, in the Buldi picture house in this city, every week an Indian picture is shown.

Q. And then these pictures are sent to the districts, I suppose?

A. Yes, they are sent out.

Q. Nagpur is the key city for supplying films to all the other districts in the province, I suppose?

A. I think Nagpur has the first choice in the matter.

Q. You say that these cinemas in the districts show Indian films almost throughout the year. I am wondering whether they are getting a sufficient supply of Indian films to use all the year round?

A. My impression is that they do get the supply regularly. I shall make more enquiries in the matter if you want me to do so. I might, however, say that more Indian films are shown than Western or imported films.

Q. Have you heard any complaint about the cinemas? I hope your electrical inspector sees all these pictures?

A. I have not heard of any complaint at all. The electrical inspector does not see the films. He only sees whether the installation is all right.

Q. Has he any occasion to report to you against the films shown?

A. No, he is not concerned with that work at all.

Q. For example, if there is any defect, say in the projector?

A. I don't think it is his duty to do so. Anyway I have not had any such complaint up to now.

Q. Would it be within his province to make enquiries in regard to such matters?

A. I am not sure about that, but I don't think that is one of his duties under the rules of the Act.

Q. He has not got to report about the nature of the films either?

A. I don't think so.

Q. As a citizen, and not as an officer of the department, have you noticed whether some of the films shown are injurious to the eyes, medically speaking?

A. I have not heard any such complaints, but I have no doubt that some of the films must be dim.

Q. As regards the possibility of starting the Film industry in your province, I suppose you have not bestowed thought on it?

A. No, we had no occasion to think about it at all.

Q. Whether there is any scope for the industry in this province you are unable to say?

A. No, I can't say.

Q. I suppose, so long as Bombay is able to cope with your demand, it will be all right?

A. We get all the required films from Bombay. As I have already said, capital will not be forthcoming to start a film industry in this province.

Q. Do the Bombay people come down here to make films and take photographs, etc.?

A. None of the professional film producers have done so up to now. The Railway film publicity bureau had come down here and they took a few agricultural films. I think they took two films, one at Jubbulpore and the other the Nerbuda washaway.

Q. It has been suggested to us that Government should grant scholarships to young people to go abroad to study the technique of the film industry.

A. I am not in favour of granting scholarships unless there is a reasonable assurance that these men could find employment on their return. For that matter, I might say, that our province was not able to absorb some of the young men whom we sent out for special training to the Bangalore Institute. I don't wish to take too narrow a view of the matter, but I have no objection to encouraging such people provided they could be absorbed anywhere in India after undergoing training.

Q. I was considering the question whether in this province there is any need to encourage the growth of film production as there is none existing and as all your wants are met by Bombay in the cinema line?

A. I don't see any special necessity for giving scholarships in this province, because for a long time to come, I don't think there will be any scope for beginning a film industry here.

Q. Do you do propaganda work in your department?

A. Yes, in the Co-operative Department. We have no cinema films, but we use magic lantern slides and we find them fairly useful and satisfactory to cope with the needs. We have also got a small cinema in connection with work in the Industrial Schools where we show some industrial films, but I find great difficulty in getting suitable films.

Q. You heard the Director of Agriculture tell us that he would welcome the idea of having a Government studio or studios for the production of Government films. What is your opinion in regard to that matter?

A. I too welcome the suggestion. A certain amount of local colouring, etc., is required. For example if it is a co-operative film, a peasant drawn from Maharashtra shown in Chhatisgarh will not appeal so much as a cultivator of that particular territory.

Q. How far are you to go in that respect? Probably there are differences in the various parts of the province itself?

A. I am speaking from a certain amount of experience of magic lantern propaganda, and we find that if the dresses, etc., are different, the picture will not be very effective. The people do not feel so much interested themselves in those pictures in which the dresses, etc., are unfamiliar to them. If the picture is to be effective, characters should be drawn from the particular part of the province where the films are to be exhibited.

Q. Take your own province. How many different types are there?

A. North, Chhatisgarh and Berar.

Q. Three types for the same subject?

A. If you have men, yes, I mean that will be ideal. Of course it may or may not be possible.

Q. Don't you think by frequent use you can educate the people out of that tendency? Probably in the first instance you may feel the difficulty. But supposing you use it constantly will they not leave the colouring, etc., and get at the substance?

A. It might be possible. But the department concerned would have to have great patience and the results of propaganda will be slow. But it would appeal very much if the films are suitable to the local conditions.

Q. That is a very difficult question, you see; to have different versions for the whole country of the same subject.

A. I am talking of educational films at present.

Q. I am also talking of educational films. It makes it a difficult proposition for Government to establish studios if in order to produce films on a subject of such general interest it is necessary to reproduce conditions peculiar to each part of a province. I mean to say that financially and economically it is a very difficult proposition. Is it not?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you think on the other hand that if it is not done the film itself will be useless?

A. I cannot say that it will be useless. But it will not be so effective as the other one.

Q. It might be possible to send out men to particular studios in a particular province. If you want to reproduce local conditions on the same subject, take public health malaria, etc., that means that in each film you will have to produce several types of negatives on the same subject. It will increase the cost.

A. Yes.

Q. Have you a strong view that unless you reproduce local conditions the film will be useless?

A. I will not say it will be entirely useless. It will not be so effective as it will be if local setting, local colouring and all other circumstances are reproduced.

Q. Do the dress and other conditions of life differ much from the Mahratta portion?

A. Yes. In Chhatisgarh the people are quite ignorant and not familiar with that type at all.

Q. Do you say that they are more attracted by the novelty of the people than by the novelty of the method which you want to enforce on their attention?

A. Yes.

Q. There are other people also who share your views? I am trying to find out whether there is any solution for it.

What about the captions in your province? In what language, which would be applicable to other parts of India would you like to have them?

A. Hindi and Marathi.

Q. Supposing they are given in Hindi alone. Will it be enough?

A. Probably it may be. Because people in Berar do understand Hindi. If there is also Marathi it will be better. I myself do not speak Marathi and when I go to the Marathi portion I speak Hindi.

Q. Of course that question about languages is a small one. About reproducing local conditions with regard to the variety of conditions it makes it a difficult proposition for Government to produce films. Supposing there was an All-India studio. If people insisted on local conditions would it not be difficult?

A. Yes.

Q. Anyway you think that wherever possible we should try to do it. Is that your idea?

A. Yes. I would prefer that. Under the circumstances the conditions are widely different. For instance Bombay and Berar go together. The United Provinces and the north of the Central Provinces go together. Chhatisgarh and the Ooriya tracts may also go together.

Q. So you believe it ought to be resorted to by Government?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you think people can be educated in this way?

A. I am entirely of that opinion.

Q. You feel the want of such films in your own propaganda work?

A. Yes. I think my work will be much more effective if I have films, both in co-operation and industries. Of course I would have to follow that up by further propaganda. I mean to say a demonstrator will have to follow.

Q. Do you go to the cinema often?

A. Not very often. I go about half-a-dozen times a year.

Q. Do you think the cinema has any baneful influence on the public?

A. I do not think so. It might have been fortunate for me that the films I saw were very good.

Q. But have you heard any general complaint?

A. No.

Q. You don't consider they have any demoralising effect?

A. No.

Q. Have you heard any complaint that the censorship is not adequate?

A. I have not.

Q. Have you seen our questionnaire?

A. Yes.

Q. Have you got any other suggestions to make?

A. Speaking from a general point of view, apart from the question of films for educational purposes, I consider that films depicting Indian life, Indian culture, Indian works of art and Indian scenes should be encouraged because they are very popular at present.

Q. You are for direct encouragement of Indian films?

A. Yes.

Q. Have you any suggestions to make as to what form that encouragement should take?

A. The Industry should be helped under the State Aid to Industries Act. For example by way of giving loans. That will help considerably. Another way is by giving scholarships, either short term or long term scholarships, short term scholarships for men who are already in the industry and long term scholarships to others. It has not got much practical application to my province.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: Why is it that people do not come forward for this business?

A. I think there is a certain amount of want of enterprise and after the boom of 1920 there have been several failures, not particularly in this province, but all over India. So people do not come forward.

Q. Are there any failures in this industry?

A. No. Another reason it is a new and untried industry.

Q. Supposing capital is found coming from abroad, do you think there will be plenty of scenario writers, camera men, actors and actresses?

A. No. Not in this province. Nor, probably, in other provinces.

Q. Instead of giving these scholarships to a few men here and sending them abroad, can we not call for experts from abroad and attach them to some schools here to teach these people the art of acting and other things?

A. I have not thought about the suggestion so far, but it seems a suitable one. Instead of sending one or two abroad we can have a school here.

Q. A school of some kind or class attached to a school of art or a college?

A. I have not considered this, but I think it would serve the purpose.

Q. Are there Co-operative Societies here?

A. Yes. There are Co-operative Societies but not for film production.

Q. Cannot all these producers' concerns be amalgamated together into a co-operative society?

A. I think co-operation is more needed in other lines than in film producing.

Q. You consider this an important industry yourself?

A. There is no film producing industry here now and I fear there is no scope for it for a long time to come.

Chairman: With Bombay so close to you, I don't think you will have a chance.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: What help do the districts and municipalities render to encourage this industry? Why do they not have their own theatres and demonstrators and show films of your own department or Public Health, Education or Agricultural Department?

A. Of course the municipalities and the local bodies' finances are so straitened at present they have not touched this question yet. There are several other things, like compulsory education or rural sanitation, to be looked after. So we cannot expect they would help this industry at all. I, for my part, am very doubtful.

Q. Do you think they will do so in the future?

A. They will not do so at least for a long time to come.

Chairman: Don't you think that this is one form of adult education?

A. Yes, but I don't think the local bodies are in a position to help it. Government should certainly encourage it.

Q. If Government does not help, should not the municipalities and local bodies help?

A. They are, as I have already said, in straitened circumstances.

Q. So what you say is: that nothing should be done for this industry till the money comes?

A. Not that nothing should be done, but, I think, without money nothing can be done. A certain amount will be forthcoming. Because the industry is a new one and experience takes a long time. It is better to be slow but sure.

Mr. Green: I take it that this province is primarily agricultural?

A. Yes.

Q. It is not commercial?

A. Primarily agricultural. We have not got much commercial enterprise. But we have something. For instance we have got cotton mills and presses.

Q. I mean to say you have not got a large commercial community?

A. No.

Q. In the nature of it, the cinema is a luxury?

A. Yes.

Q. That is why you consider that you have many more promising lines of development than this line?

A. Yes.

Written Statement of Mr. R. H. BECKETT, Officiating Director of Public Instruction, Central Provinces, dated the 29th January 1928.

In the replies below I have confined myself to those questions relating to matters which have a social or educational interest.

GENERAL.

2. (a) The popularity of the cinema in Nagpur has increased considerably of recent years both among the educated and uneducated classes, and seems likely to continue to increase in the future. Taking the province as a whole, the opportunities for visiting the cinema are slight on account of the scattered nature of the population. It is only in big towns like Nagpur and Jubbulpore that facilities exist.

(b) The composition of the average audience is difficult to estimate. It depends largely on the type of film being exhibited. For example, the Mount Everest Expedition films drew a highly cultured audience composed largely of the professional and student classes. Films dealing with Indian drama usually draw a fairly large proportion of the audience from the student class. Films of the American social drama type do not appear to draw the educated public to the same extent.

(c) Only a small proportion of the audience consists of children or adolescents and most of these appear to be drawn from the Anglo-Indian or Parsee community.

PART I.

Film Industry in India.

3. The class of films which appears to be most popular with Indian audiences are generally those of the "Harold Lloyd" type, for humour

is keenly appreciated. The instructional type of film does not appear to be in great demand and very few films of this type are shown in Nagpur. In other words, the cinema is looked upon as a relaxation rather than as a means of education. Among the lower classes the emotional film portrayed plenty of action and the triumph of right over wrong are popular. To an illiterate audience it appears that these take the place occupied by the modern novel in the life of literate western people.

4. In Nagpur Indian audiences seem to be well catered for in this respect.

6. (a) Probably not. A large proportion of the audience is unlikely to be familiar with the literature and in any case they would lose the powerful stimulus to interest which the western film supplies on account of its novelty, ludicrous situations and exaggerated movements.

(b) (1) National literature, history and mythology would appeal to the educated classes, but the cinema clientèle in Nagpur is probably too small to make the proposition a commercial success.

(b) (2) I am doubtful whether films of this kind would appeal to the illiterate classes of undeveloped intelligence. The dearth of good juvenile literature in the vernaculars suitable for school boys is not without bearing on this topic.

14. If cheap travelling cinemas showing films of this kind could be sent into the rural agricultural districts, they would help to produce a better informed adult population. The demand for such films does, I think, exist, and it should receive every encouragement in the interests of adult education. I am told that films shown during baby weeks have drawn good audiences and have popularised welfare work. But the production of films of this nature needs expert guidance and supervision in order that the essentially educational factors should be emphasized. The exhibition of such films should be supplemented by lectures if permanent good is to result. The visual stimulus alone soon exhausts itself.

20. (a) Unless Government is prepared to subsidize such productions as those referred to in question 14, it is unlikely that films of the right type will be forthcoming. More exciting productions will always be more commercially successful. Properly handled, the educational film should be a most important factor in the production of a better informed people. In fact, it is open to question whether more good would not result by the education of illiterate adults along these lines than by attempting to render them literate. Visual instruction might be a better investment than night schools for adults.

(b) I am inclined to think that financial assistance must be provided by the Government concerned for this as for other educational schemes.

20. A State monopoly of the film industry would I fear, fetter developments. For propaganda work it might be successful, but I doubt its ability to inspire a high degree of artistic creation.

23. (a) For Geography teaching in schools such films would be of great educational value—the next best to actual experience and travel.

(b) An exchange of films of the type referred to in question 14, if it could be arranged among the various Governments, or the purchase at cheap rates, by Government departments, of films, the production of which has been subsidized by Government, seems the only possible measure.

24. (a), (b) No.

(c) As stated in reply to question 3 the cinema appears to be regarded as a means of relaxation and is not, I think, taken too seriously as being a reflex of life. I do not think, therefore, that its social influence is very great.

(d) For reasons stated in (c) the censorship at present appears to be adequate.

(e) No, especially in view of the fact that a small proportion of the audience is juvenile.

25. I do not think that any special consideration in the censorship of films in this country is called for as long as the cinema is regarded as a relaxation, like the reading of fairy stories by children; but the line should be drawn at "sex" films of an objectional nature.

26. No cases of films likely to offend religious susceptibilities have come to my notice. The censorship, if it has operated in this respect, appears to be satisfactory.

27. (a) Western civilization is frequently falsely portrayed on the film, but for reasons already given (*vide* question 3) I doubt whether any deleterious effects follow.

(b) No.

28. (a), (b) Not to my knowledge.

29. No. To do so would certainly excite curiosity and there is no clear cut distinction between adults and adolescents. The average Indian juvenile has a fair knowledge of the facts of life. He matures earlier than the western child, also the cinema habit is less common among Indian juveniles of this province than in the west.

30. For reasons given in the reply to question 29 I do not recommend this procedure.

31. Yes, provided it is intelligent. A too rigorous application of censorship may cramp the development of cinema art. A people can be made neither moral nor cultured by protective wrappings. They must be trusted to accept the good and to discard the evil. Censorship is undoubtedly necessary, but it should not be carried to extremes or be too narrow, otherwise it might have a restricting influence on the effect of the cinema as a factor for promoting the cultural and moral development of the people.

Oral Evidence of Mr. R. H. BECKETT, Officiating Director of Public Instruction and Secretary to the Government of the Central Provinces in the Education Department, on Monday, the 6th February 1928, at Nagpur.

Chairman: I would like to trouble you only with one or two points. The first point is about the use of the cinema in educational institutions for supplementing education. Has your department considered that?

A. It has not been considered at present.

Q. But what is your opinion about it?

A. I think that it has a certain, though a limited scope. Experiments in England have been tried in connection with the cinema. It is of some educational use, but that use is a limited one. I think that the cinema would be much more useful in India for propaganda work in the districts, in connection with agriculture, public health, etc., for widening general knowledge.

Q. It would be a sort of adult education, widening the general outlook and giving knowledge of matters of public health, etc.

A. It should be.

Q. It would also help to remove the ignorance of the people in many respects?

A. It would, though to a limited extent.

Q. Is your department going in for adult education at all?

A. To some extent. The question is now under the consideration of Government. I take it that you mean adult education with regard to literacy?

Q. Yes.

A. So far our attempts in that direction have not been very successful. It is difficult to get adults to attend classes at the end of the day's work when they are tired.

Q. So adult education, in order to make them literate, may be a difficult proposition?

A. Yes. As I have said in my written evidence.

Q. The only point on which I would trouble you is are you in favour of the establishment of a Government studio for producing these educational films in the broad sense?

A. I am inclined to think that films should be produced under professional guidance, with the advice and collaboration of educational experts. Of course Government could get the necessary professionals and form a Government film producing company but I should prefer to make use of professional firms because I think it would be better and cheaper from the Government point of view.

Q. The private producers now are very busy and they find it more profitable to produce entertainment films rather than educational films. Their time is fully occupied.

A. Yes. Commercially, entertainment films would be more paying than educational and therefore if these films are to be produced (I use the word educational in its broader sense, I mean films for propaganda work generally) I imagine that some financial assistance would have to be given by Government.

Q. The difficult question is whether it would be better if the Government themselves pioneer in that direction for a number of years and get the necessary experts and start producing educational films or whether it would be better to leave it to the producers of the entertainment films, experts being made available for their use also?

A. As I have already said I am inclined to think that the better way would be for Government to pay commercial firms to produce educational films. They would have sufficient technical knowledge and Government, by paying such a company and giving the necessary advice, should get its films at a cheaper rate and probably of better quality than if Government produced the films itself.

Q. I suppose that you have got the general conviction that Government agencies are more costly than the employment of private agencies for these purposes?

A. Yes.

Q. That is your chief objection to a Government studio?

A. I have not sufficient knowledge to commit myself to a very definite opinion. But on the whole I should imagine that the more suitable thing would be to subsidise a company for the production of a particular film. I do not mean a general subsidy. But merely to ask the company what they would be prepared to produce the film for, in fact to invite tenders.

Q. If that is possible, you would advise that policy being resorted to?

A. The thing must be done by professionals, and I should have thought that Government would have had a wider choice if they made use of firms who are professionally engaged on this work.

Q. Does the student population go to the cinema much?

A. Yes, to certain films.

Q. And as you say in your statement, people go there for amusement and not for education?

A. At present that is the case.

Q. And once they have had the amusement, they don't bother to think about what they have seen?

A. It depends on the film. The student population here who patronise the cinema are mostly college and high school students.

Q. It has been suggested in other places that there is a fear that the adolescent students might be affected by what they see on the screen?

A. I have expressed an opinion on this point in my written statement. I don't think the effect to be taken too seriously.

Q. Especially some Indian professors in Calcutta felt that apprehension, that it might have a deleterious effect on their morals? But that is not your opinion?

A. I am inclined to think that when students see certain films, they recognise that they are a misrepresentation of real life in the same way as a novel of an exciting type misrepresents real life. I think they do discriminate. There is one point in the written statement I have sent which I should like to modify. This statement was based on a very limited experience in India. I am told that the Indian film does appeal, particularly to illiterate Indian audiences more than the western film does. In my written evidence I have expressed the contrary opinion. I should like to modify that statement in view of what I have subsequently heard.

Mr. Green: Does this province spend much money on visual instruction?

A. Very little at present. The matter is again under consideration; but previous attempts at visual instruction, given chiefly with the aid of lantern slides, were not successful. The villagers generally got tired of seeing them, especially those of a rather dull instructional type.

Q. One educational officer of a certain province told us that having experimented with lantern slides, he found that uneducated persons failed to appreciate the real meaning; and he concluded that the moving picture would be still more unintelligible?

A. I do not subscribe to that view. I think that the moving picture would be more intelligible.

Q. You are insistent on the need for professional firms producing the films for your purposes as much as for commercial purposes?

A. Yes.

Q. Have you seen any of the Indian films so far produced?

A. I have seen a few.

Q. You think their technique shows evidence of good professional guidance?

A. No, I think the contrary. But I have seen very few. I have seen one really good Indian film.

Q. If after fully studying the question, this Committee comes to the conclusion that the professional abilities of the present producing companies are not up to the standard, would you think we should be justified in saying that for Government purposes, they should import their own professional experts, at any rate until such time as sufficient professional talent is available in India?

A. It is rather a technical question and a question on which I should hesitate to give an opinion. I imagine that if it is going to be sufficiently remunerative commercially, the firms interested would find it to their advantage to employ the experts themselves. But whether it is necessary for them to receive a subsidy in the beginning, I am not really in a position to say. So much depends upon the market. If the market here is very limited, they may not be able to afford to get the best men, I think.

Q. You told us that you thought that people who visited cinemas realised that the life and the scenes indicated were not real?

A. I think they are able to discriminate. It depends on the type of film. When they see films of current events, they recognise that it is real life; but when they come to the exciting dramas, they naturally treat them, as they would a novel.

Q. Are there many Indian stages in this province?

A. There are a certain number of them.

Q. I take it that inasmuch as you say the audience realise that a stage play is not altogether real life, it will be so in the case of the cinema?

A. I think they discriminate. Certainly, the more educated in the audience discriminate.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: There is no Inspector of Visual Instruction here as we have in the Bombay Presidency?

A. No.

Q. Do you propose to have one?

A. The question of visual instruction will I think be taken up by Government, shortly in connection with the question of adult education which is now being considered.

Q. Is there any scheme from your department before the Government, for the encouragement of this industry?

A. No.

Q. What do you think of the cinema as a means of giving supplementary instruction in the class room?

A. I do not think it has great scope in the class room. I think that the cinema can be put to greater use in the districts in connection, as I have said, with general propaganda work for instruction on public health problems, etc. I remember seeing, for example, a leprosy film which was accompanied by a lecture—as films of this type always should because, as I have said in my evidence, the visual stimulus is not by any means lasting—which impressed me as a wonderful piece of propaganda work. No person suffering from leprosy could see that film without recognising the possibility of being cured and I should imagine, taking steps to be cured, if possible.

Q. Are there any cinema outfits in the colleges anywhere in this province?

A. No.

Q. Do you think it is better to supply such outfits to the several schools and colleges out here?

A. I think that the expenses would probably be out of all proportion to the educational benefit derived.

Q. Have you text-book committees?

A. Yes.

Q. Suppose you have a cinema education committee like the text-book committee, in your province, to assist and advise you on the subject, how would you like that?

A. I am afraid I do not quite understand. In regard to the production of films, I do not think we can undertake to produce films. I think we want some sort of central organization whereby the different Governments would know what was being done elsewhere and what educational films were available.

Q. What kind of organization do you mean, a board of censors or an advisory committee to the Government?

A. I am not dealing now with the production of films; but I think it would be useful to have a sort of bureau of information to which, for example, I could write and ascertain what sort of films could be got on say, geography or any other subject. I also suggest that the best way of showing these films would be by having travelling cinemas, instead of a cinema in every school, which would be very expensive.

Q. Would you have an advisory committee for encouraging the industry?

A. The encouragement of the industry is scarcely an educational matter, and I am interested only in films on educational subjects. As far as the production of educational films is concerned, I think firms would require the collaboration of educational experts rather than have an advisory committee.

Chairman: Would you advocate that in the Central Government there should be a department dealing with the circulation of films?

A. I lay much stress on that. It would be very much cheaper for every body concerned.

Q. Also a library of films which will be circulated to those who require them?

A. I think so; undoubtedly. It would be very useful.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: Do you think the cinema industry should be taught in schools?

A. No. I think it would be cheaper to have cinemas operated by experts who understand the machinery, rather than put them into non-experts' hands. That would be very expensive.

Q. Suppose there is a board of censors formed in this province, do you think honorary workers will come forward to serve on the board?

A. I have no doubt that you will find the workers; but I do not think that a board of that sort is advisable. I think that the censor should be a carefully selected person. That would be much better, I imagine, than having a large board which would probably contain people with ideas which might hamper the industry.

Q. Do you think that the circulars and hand-bills going into schools and colleges, say regarding dancing scenes, love scenes, etc., produce any bad effect?

A. I think certain films objectionable. As I said in my evidence, sex films of an objectionable type should certainly be censored. As far as I have seen however, on the whole, there has been a reasonable censorship, and I have not seen personally any films which are of a very objectionable nature.

Chairman: Are any posters or hand-bills circulated in the colleges?

A. Yes, hand-bills are circulated.

Q. You have not seen any objectionable ones?

A. Nothing seriously objectionable. You get the same things circulated in all countries. As I have said in my evidence, "A people can be made neither moral nor cultured by protective wrappings". We want reasonable censorship, but we want a censorship which is not going to handicap the industry out of existence.

Oral Evidence of Lt.-Col. H. G. STILES WEBB, D.P.H., D.T.M.&H. (Cantab.), I.M.S., Director of Public Health, Central Provinces, Nagpur, on Monday, the 6th February 1928.

Chairman: How long have you been Director of Public Health in this province?

A. Since, I came here in February 1925.

Q. Were you in this province when Mrs. Rolfe and a gentleman came here as the representatives of the Social Hygiene Delegation last year?

A. Yes.

Q. Did you meet them at all?

A. I do not think I did. I do not think they came to this province. But I have heard that they showed some films in some provinces which were objectionable, and which would frighten everybody.

Q. I do not know if you have seen their report on the cinema. (Handing over the report). Please read paragraphs 1 and 3. You are more concerned, as Director of Public Health, with paragraph 1. They say: "as one of the

major factors in lowering the standard of sex conduct, and thereby tending to increase the dissemination of disease". Is that your experience?

A. Well, I can be perfectly candid with you. I have seen one film by Mr. B. K. Gestener on leprosy and that was a very good picture. I do think that these lurid films are strongly objectionable, and that they lower the prestige of the European in this country in the eyes of the Indians. This is wrong because they are not depicting the true state of living either in America or England, or anywhere else. It is something spectacular which may attract the Indian crowd, but I do not think they care much about these things. They are however, likely to do harm.

Q. Do you think the cinema is responsible for increasing the dissemination of disease?

A. No, I do not think so.

Q. You say you do not go to the cinema much yourself?

A. No.

Q. You just now made a statement that it lowers the prestige of the European in this country?

A. I think it might do harm.

Q. Your objection to it is in what sense?

A. In the sense that it will give a wrong impression.

Q. How can you judge if you do not go to see the cinema?

A. Well, I give you my opinion.

Q. Is that opinion gathered from what you read in the press sometimes?

A. I have occasionally read in the papers about a film being stopped, etc.; but beyond that I am afraid I do not know.

Q. If people are able to understand a drama, they don't think it is real life, do they?

A. They have Indian plays here, especially in Jubbulpore and some other places. I have never heard there was anything objectionable.

Q. Your fear is that it may lower the prestige of the European. Is it based on the fact that the Indian is not capable of appreciating the true value of the film?

A. The educated Indian is all right, but the youths from school or college may get a wrong impression. The same will be the case with our own boys and girls for the matter of that. European boys and girls are not of mature age even at 14 and if they are to be shown these things, certainly, it might be harmful. I am making no distinction, I say generally "youth".

Q. Of any country, you mean?

A. Yes, of any country.

Q. You recognise, I suppose, the cinema is more for amusement than for anything else. People do not go there for learning virtue or morals?

A. It is true; they go there to spend an hour of relaxation.

Q. I suppose you have not seen these films which are shown in the up-country parts, i.e., the travelling cinema shows?

A. No, I have never seen them.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: On what subject have you come here to give evidence?

A. I am here at your disposal to answer any question.

Q. In what question are you interested; have you seen the questionnaire?

A. Question No. 14 says: "Do you consider that an increased use of the cinema for adult education in Agriculture, Public Health, etc., would help the growth of the film industry". I am sure I do not know anything about the film industry to answer that question. But so far as public health is concerned, I think it would be of some use. Our difficulty has been that it is rather expensive. We have just been trying by supplying magic lanterns to travelling dispensaries, we have 29 of them and we hope to have 10 more and 4 special ones for malaria.

Q. Don't you think it will be useful to have films about malaria and other diseases shown by these travelling dispensaries?

A. I think so, especially in the case of longstanding diseases, such as venereal diseases, etc.

Q. Have you any cinema films now on that?

A. No, not now.

Q. Was the one you had made in your province?

A. No, I think it came down from Delhi.

Q. How much money have you got in this year's budget for this?

A. I have got nothing. A good portion comes under special propaganda under 'Child Welfare' and under 'Travelling dispensaries'. This year we have got about Rs. 70,000 which includes a provision of Rs. 20,000 for the new Health School for training our workers; some goes to the Red Cross and we have to depend practically on working through their agency for this at present.

Q. There is a good deal of malaria in this province?

A. Yes.

Q. If films on malaria are shown in those parts, the people will be greatly benefited and the money spent thereon will be well spent?

A. But how are we going to get the film on malaria?

Q. There is a film already in the United Provinces, and if you want it you can get it on loan.

A. But we have not got the necessary machinery for a cinema.

Q. You can get the machinery for a small sum of Rs. 1,000 or so.

A. The whole difficulty is that we have in the budget only a small amount.

Q. But Rs. 50,000 is quite sufficient for buying an outfit?

A. If you suggest that a larger amount should be spent on this, I agree with you entirely.

Q. I suppose you know the "Tragedy of Small Pox". That is also a good film?

A. I would be only too pleased to show them at some of the large fairs or Health Weeks in big towns like Jubbulpore, Nagpur, Raipur, etc.

Q. Have you ever requested the Government for more money and have they ever refused? I mean for cinema outfit?

A. I have been in this province for nearly three years and all along I have been trying to get a public health institute. That is the most important thing for my department, and till I get that, I do not worry about much else.

Q. If you bring out its importance by means of these shows, don't you think that public-spirited men will come forward with some subscriptions?

A. I think all the provinces combined are donating for the Viceroy's Leprosy Fund, and I do not think a small province alone like this can afford to subscribe for such a beneficial purpose. I think this year they may be asked to subscribe for tuberculosis.

Oral Evidence of Mr. J. L. MOTT, Secretary, Young Men's Christian Association, Nagpur, on Monday, the 6th February 1928.

Chairman: You are the Secretary of the Young Men's Christian Association?

A. Yes.

Q. How long have you been here?

A. Seven years.

Q. Have you got a hostel attached to it also?

A. We have a college student hostel. My main work has been the running of the welfare work of the Empress Cotton Mills which is a very big cotton mill, with nearly eight thousand labourers and others. We have a staff of about half a dozen Secretaries.

Q. What do you do?

A. We have night schools in seven centres throughout the city and have had all these years fed several hundred men, boys and girls in the night schools. Inside the mill compound we have a cinema outfit with which we give open air shows several times during a year. For six years now I have been trying to get suitable films for that. We can get from three to four thousand people any night. These mill hands bring their wives and children to the shows; and if we have an Indian film, we have to take sufficient precautions because the crowd will be so large. Therefore, we have no difficulty about popularity but the difficulty has all along been to get the right sort of films we want.

Q. Where do you get them from?

A. We get them either from Bombay or from Calcutta or even from local dealers.

Q. You don't levy any fee?

A. We charge nothing, though we have to pay the dealers; but we get fairly good rates. We paid Rs. 350 for Indian films and Rs. 75 to Rs. 100 for western films. A recent Indian film was so popular that the people broke down the roof of a tin shed which they had climbed on in order to see. They do appreciate Indian films and seem to understand them better than western films.

Q. Would you like more Indian films?

A. Yes. I should like more of the right kind.

Q. Have you seen any Indian films, any objectionable ones?

A. No. But we want films having a recreational and educational value. We need them to supplement our night school work. Our experience has been that it is difficult to get adults or even boys over 16 to come to night schools. As I said we have 7 schools, having in all a strength of over 300, but when there is a cinema show over 3,000 come to see it.

Q. You believe in educational films?

A. I do. It has real possibilities with the industrial population. It seems to me that it ought to have real value also in the Indian villages.

Q. The difficulty is to get these films?

A. Yes.

Q. You think Government should get a good supply of them?

A. I should like it very much if it could be taken up as a national proposition.

Q. Would you want Government to undertake the production of such films or only see that they are produced?

A. I think the educational side of things they ought to see to. None but Government would have sufficient funds, unless, perhaps some private organisation like the Rockefeller Foundation. I have been looking forward with the hope that something of that kind might be taken up by Government. I am myself so interested in the matter that I have a small miniature complete outfit which was given to me, with which I can get, at any time, films which may be of value to the people. Last January we had a Boy Scout demonstration before eight to ten thousand people in the mill compound at the time of their Jubilee. I took pictures of this demonstration showing the various activities of the boy scouts, life saving, tent building, bridge building and so forth. I have shown it to the Scouts since. It was not a very good picture but it was a film which could give boys an idea of what Scouting could teach them. Even an amateur might do things that would be of some value educationally. We have in Nagpur every year a Health week. There are sometimes small films shown and we have twice staged a drama showing in dramatic form the warfare between sickness and health and the advantages of health. This was seen by thousands of people. In the same way the cinema can do much propaganda work. I am a believer in the use of the cinema for such purposes.

Q. It is very encouraging to hear that the mills provide the funds for carrying on this work.

A. Yes. The people have a good time several times in the year and if we had educational films, I am sure the mill authorities would be willing to hire any good film that is produced. These mills are Tata mills. There are also Tata Mills at Jamshedpur, Ahmedabad and Bombay.

Q. They may even pay for it, the cost of production or a nominal hire?

A. I think we could get a considerable class of employers who might be willing to do hire educational films if the films are good.

Q. If the Government or Government institution supported such production would they give any guarantee of showing the films?

A. I think if it were done in the right way you might get a large number of mills to do that, because I know nothing that could reach more people in an educational way for such a small price. We pay Rs. 75 for two shows and in that time six to ten thousand people come to see the show. If the film had any value I think it would be worth it. Instead of paying Rs. 15,000 for night schools reaching 300 people, it might be better to hire 150 educational films for Rs. 100 each and reach a much larger number of people. One is giving intensive education, the other would have a broadening and educative effect. It will take many many years to make the people of India literate. In the meantime films of this kind will surely do something that would give them a broader idea of the world and of life. Pathé Gazette pictures show people life and conditions in other countries. Films teaching public health, civics, cleanliness and things of that kind can really be useful in giving the people some helpful ideas. This should be done in India along with the effort to make more literate.

Q. Do you go to the cinema?

A. I am not much of a cinema-goer. I am a producer and I give private shows. I have an amateur set for my work for producing and showing. 95 per cent. of the films supplied by America to the cinemas are produced by cinema outfits made by the same company. This company is the Bell & Howell Co., Chicago. I will be glad to show it to you. (It was shown to the members on the 7th at the Council Chamber by Mr. Mott.) This complete outfit costs less than 600 dollars in America, including camera, projector and generator. They produce cameras worth about 45,000 dollars or Rs. 15,000. I have given shows outside Nagpur also. With this outfit I can project a picture, 4' by 5' in size which 200 people can see conveniently. One could give 2 shows with 200 people present at each, and I think there are not more people in an average Indian village. By using the small-size camera you cut your cost tremendously. That is my suggestion.

Q. How do you develop them?

A. The Kodak Co. in Bombay do it for me.

Q. You take the photograph yourself?

A. Yes. I am still very much of an amateur but the right man using the camera can get very useful pictures. With a Ford car to generate the power and this outfit, a touring cinema could show these pictures to 30 different villages in a month. This is worthwhile I think.

Q. You are in touch with the labour population generally?

A. That is my main job.

Q. Do you think when they see a picture they are able to appreciate it at its true value.

A. I should not say so. I have heard it from our Indian staff that after they see one thing on the picture they explain it totally differently from what the pictures meant to portray. But on the other hand I would say the illiterate audience are remarkably quick in knowing what the plot is and what the plan is, particularly in Indian mythological plays. They enjoy comic scenes very much.

Q. What I want to know from you is this. Supposing a western film, an American film portraying the under-world life were shown, do you think they are likely to misunderstand it, i.e., the ordinary life led by the Westerner?

A. I think it is possible. I have no way of gauging it. I think they might misinterpret it. Some of them must take it literally. In the Indian Young Men's Christian Association in France a tiger was exhibited on the

screen and one of the men present immediately ran behind the screen to look for it. But, of course, I have no evidence of that sort of literal interpretation here. It is simply an entertainment. Anyway I do not think it tends to improve their ideas of the West.

Q. What other means of attending cinemas have the labour population?

A. There are cinema places where they can go for 3 annas and even 2 annas in the city. But how many go there I do not know.

Q. Unless they are Indian pictures they don't go perhaps?

A. Yes, from what I gather from the local cinema people the lower paid population goes to the Indian pictures rather than the western pictures.

Q. Are you satisfied with the censorship?

A. I don't know what types of pictures are censored. I don't know much on the subject.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: Is your cinema outfit licenced here?

A. No. It is a baby cinema and I give the performance whenever I choose at home. It is a private show, that I have in my own bungalow.

Q. How many films have you produced.

A. I only started it just a year and a half ago. I suppose I must have taken about 20 to 30 films of 100 ft. each.

Q. And what did it cost you?

A. Rs. 20 each.

Q. Do any of your films show Indians in shady colours?

A. No.

Mr. Green: You were referring to the Rockefeller Foundation. This is, I think, a very wealthy foundation. Would they be prepared to spend any money in India?

A. I don't know. I read a leading article in the "Hindu" of Madras saying that the Rockefeller Foundation do not do much work in India and the explanation was that the Government discouraged any outside organisation coming in on the ground that the Government are doing everything necessary themselves. Whether there is anything in it, I don't know.

Q. Have you come across the Salvation Army in India?

A. No.

Q. I suppose there is nothing in the nature of the Rockefeller Foundation to prevent them spending money in India?

A. None that I know of.

Q. You want Government to take the initiative?

A. I am for it because I want it see it done. I don't think it would work as a commercial proposition.

Q. You have no knowledge of any definite harm done by the films in any particular instance?

A. Except that it kept my students from their study more than it should!

Q. Do you notice any tendency among them to become wider awake, to get broader interests?

A. No. I do not think so except it may be in the way of a little more love of a good time or a little more lazy way of life. The effect is, I think, nil.

Chairman: Have you got your camera here?

A. No. But I would be glad to show it to the members, Sir. I have got it in my bungalow. It is just a small outfit but it costs more than any other.

Q. I should like to see it.

A. Yes, Sir, I will show it here in the Council Chamber to-morrow at 10-30.

Written Statement of Rao Bahadur K. V. BRAHMA, M.B.E., Amraoti; President, Berar Co-operative Institute; Member of the District Council, Amraoti and the Municipal Committee, Amraoti Town; ex-Council Secretary to Central Provinces Legislative Council; Honorary Secretary, Berar Victoria Technical and Industrial Society.

2. Speaking of the audiences in cinema theatres in Berar and at Nagpur of which I have personal knowledge, cinema shows are patronised by all classes of Indian Society, literate as well as illiterate. The number of the latter class is of course larger. Educated classes patronise only a certain class of films; the illiterate and the semi-literate patronise all kinds of shows for the amusement they provide at a comparatively cheap cost. Cinema habit is catching.

(b) Speaking generally, the audience consists of 33 per cent. boys, 50 per cent. illiterate and semi-literate boys and the rest persons who may be classed as educated.

(c) I put the percentage of boys between 33 to 40. This includes adolescents of impressionable age.

3. Films of romance, abounding in scenery and comic films are generally popular. The foolish people appreciate and applaud films of a religious type, particularly stories drawn from Puranas and from Indian history.

4. Not adequately. Variety is wanting and this is due I think to want of films. This in its turn may be due to lack of capital and enterprise.

5. Indian films are inferior to the foreign films—both in the make of acting, scenery and photographic re-production. Film production is in its infancy and cinema "stars" are yet to be born in India. Study abroad and encouragement at home may facilitate early development.

(b) Indian films are certainly more popular in spite of the inferiority for the obvious reason that they appeal to masses more readily than the western films.

(c) I can't say about comparative profitableness, but I know films shown on the screens at Amraoti about the Mahratta Hero "Shivaji the Great" and "Damaji Pant—a Mahratta Saint" and "Bhasmasur", a Puranic demon were so popular that the cinema owner made a good profit. These films are repeated thrice in one night and yet the audiences were not thinned.

6. (a) Yes.

(b) Films on historical subjects and on topics which actuate morals and assist the development of the sense of public duty and encourage will appeal to the educated.

Religious films based on "Indian religious" will appeal to the illiterate and the women class more especially.

14. Certainly. No stone should be left unturned for this. No instruction is more effective than "visual instruction" according to my experience. No money should be spared for this and Government should be made to realize that this is one of their many obligatory duties for helping the nation-building departments.

16. No. Foreign scholarships and buying or hiring of films for shows by Government Departments may be useful as a step-in-aid.

17. Administrative action by way of fathoming ways for making suitable use of cinema screens for education purposes will go a long way. I do not think any legislative action is advisable. Forcing a thing by legislation always fails.

21. This should not be avoided. Commercial ventures by Government always prove costly to the tax-payers.

22. Nothing is to be gained by the participation proposed.
 (a) I doubt.
 (b) I apprehend the contrary would be the result.
 (c) Not at all.

23. This can be done independently of participation. Such subjects can be included in the educative films, that Government Departments in India should think of.

(b) The Departments of Agriculture, Public Health, Education and Medicine of various Provincial Governments should combine in basing films prepared and exhibited in several centres.

24. (c) I don't think crime is on the increase on account of cinema, but I know of an instance where criminally minded people take to new ways of crime from the pictures of crime sometimes shown on the screens. I know of an instance of a theft committed by a gang of persons in Amraoti where the use of electric rope and getting in through windows was practised in a house much in the same way as is sometimes depicted on the screens. The connection between the cinema and the crime may be distant, but there is no doubt a criminal learns new ways. This is perhaps unavoidable. Some evil is bound to flow from some good.

25. Yes.

26. (a) Yes.

(b) I know of no instance.

27. No, so far I know. A greater portion of films depicting western life is unintelligible to the rural people who resort to the cinema shows. I don't think any undesirable results follow.

28. Love stories depicted on Western lines excite the Indian youths. In my opinion, censoring should be adhered to for cutting scenes where this is over-done.

29-30. No.

31. Yes.

33. Censorship done discriminately and wisely should not have the effects contemplated in (a), (b) and (c).

34. I should advocate Central Boards in addition to Provincial Boards. India is so vast that there is need for both. Provincial Boards should act in subordination to the Central Boards, but should have the liberty of prohibiting films harmful to the Province. They should have the liberty of recommending to Central Boards for certifying films for provincial or local exhibition.

35. (a) Yes.

40. Yes.

42. A representative of the trade should be associated in some way with the Board of Censors.

44. I don't think public bodies in Berar can assist much. The Press can always do by writing favourably on good films and by criticising the bad ones. It is possible some influential papers may be induced to advertise good films at concession rates.

45. (b) Yes.

**Oral Evidence of Rao Bahadur K. V. BRAHMA, M.B.E., High Court
 Yakil, Amraoti, on Tuesday, the 7th February 1928.**

Chairman: You are from Amraoti?

A. Yes.

Q. How many cinemas are there, can you tell us?

A. There are two permanent ones in Amraoti town.

Q. Do they show pictures all through the year?

A. Yes, they do. In the case of one cinema owing to some internal dispute in the management, it has been temporarily closed, but I think it will begin to work again ere long.

Mr. Green: I suppose it is a legal dispute?

A. Yes.

Chairman: Are they owned by independent people?

A. Yes, they are owned by two different sets of people.

Q. Who owns these theatres?

A. They are managed by Marwari gentlemen.

Q. Do they own these theatres themselves?

A. No, they don't own them. They are only exhibitors. The theatres belong to some other gentlemen.

Q. Then what do they do for the stage?

A. In these cinema halls themselves, sometimes dramas are also staged during the nights, after 9 P.M. Generally the cinema shows are from 6 to 8 P.M.

Q. Now and then the hall is also used for dramatic purposes, I think?

A. Yes, that is right.

Q. These theatrical performances, do they show them throughout the year?

A. They give dramatic performances every now and then, except during the monsoon time.

Q. So these halls are used both for the cinema and dramatic performances?

A. Only one of the theatres, which has a corrugated roof, is used for theatrical performances also. But there is a more popular one, where there are cinema performances, which has a permanent structure.

Mr. Green: Is that the Bharat Picture Palace which is more popular there?

A. No, I refer to the Ramakrishna Picture House.

Chairman: Do you go to the cinema often?

A. I don't class myself as a regular cinema-goer. I go to the cinemas occasionally, sometimes with friends, etc.

Q. Can you say, roughly, how often in the year you go to the cinemas?

A. Roughly about 15 times in the year.

Q. And have you seen Indian films?

A. Yes, many of them.

Q. In these theatres, do they show both Western and Indian pictures?

A. Yes, they do.

Q. How many times do they exhibit in a day?

A. Generally twice a day.

Q. What is the population of Amraoti?

A. I should say about 40,000 including the civil station attached to the town. In the cotton season it comes up to about 50,000 people which includes the floating population attracted to the town, owing to cotton business.

Mr. Green: It is a big cotton centre?

A. Yes, in fact, Amraoti is the biggest cotton market in Berar.

Chairman: Both the cinema houses there, do they show pictures every day? Even on those days when there are no theatrical performances?

A. Yes.

Q. How long have the cinemas been in existence in Amraoti?

A. For the last 10 or 12 years.

Q. And besides these have you travelling cinemas also there?

A. I don't think so.

Q. I suppose cinema-going is becoming a habit with the people generally?

A. Yes, that is what I think, more than it ought to, but that is a matter of opinion.

Q. Why do you say so?

A. The lowest rate for the show is 3 annas per head and I don't think an average Indian could afford it often. I have no objection to their going to these cinemas if their income would afford it.

Q. Why do you grudge it? After all it is an amusement?

A. I have no objection to cinema-going as such, but, economically speaking, an ordinary Indian cannot afford it. That is my opinion.

Q. Do you think he is not able to make 3 annas to pay for a show?

A. They spend more than they can afford and there is a tendency to spend more and sit in the higher classes, the 8 annas or the rupee class I mean.

Q. So that is your regret?

A. I believe the average man spends more than he ought to.

Q. What other amusement have they got?

A. There are theatrical performances and other public amusements.

Q. Which is the more innocent, theatres or cinemas?

A. I should think cinemas are cheaper and the more innocent of the two.

Q. I thought as much. You think there is more vulgarity in the theatres?

A. I should not definitely say it is vulgar, but in many places they sometimes overdo things.

Q. And so you prefer cinemas from the point of view of morals, I suppose?

A. Yes.

Q. And also, probably because cinemas give a better outlook on the world and its conditions?

A. Yes.

Q. Perhaps the stage is confined to the local stories and the cinema gives them knowledge of the world?

A. Yes.

Q. So that your opinion is that the cinema is more useful and less harmful?

A. I should think so.

Q. So now would you like to change your tone of regret?

A. My point is that some people are spending more than they really ought to on these amusements. My complaint is against the villager catching the "town habit" which he can ill afford. For example, a villager will be satisfied with an ordinary smoke for a half pice, when in his village but when he comes to town he goes in for a cigarette which he cannot afford.

Q. Don't you think it is also a necessity for a man who labours hard throughout the day to have some amusement after his work in the evenings?

A. If he does not labour and work hard and is not able to earn at least one rupee a day all the year round, I don't think he could afford 8 annas or a rupee for amusement like this.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: Do they not spend their money on liquor?

A. Yes, they do and not only that they are also addicted to all sorts of town vices. That is why I said that cinema-going is the most innocent of all vices.

Chairman: The more one spends on cinemas the less will he spend on liquors, I suppose?

A. I should not think so. It is all a matter of opinion.

Q. Do you get any educational films, in the broad sense of the term, sent out by the Public Departments of Government?

A. Very rarely. They were thinking of fitting up a lorry, but I don't know whether they have abandoned the idea.

Q. We have been told that you will be having the lorry in March next and that the Agricultural Department will be sending out agricultural films to be shown in the villages in this province.

A. I think between 1916 and 1918 they were showing War pictures by means of lorries.

Q. In the recruitment days, I suppose?

A. Yes, I think so.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: Have you any idea as to where these lorries are now?

A. No, I don't know.

Chairman: You think public utility pictures should be shown?

A. Yes, I think so, most decidedly.

Q. Do you think that public utility pictures would be followed well by the uneducated classes?

A. I think they will be able to follow well.

Q. Do you think public money should be spent on these educational films?

A. Yes.

Q. And the films should be made available for public exhibition?

A. Yes.

Q. Where do the exhibitors get their Indian films from?

A. From Poona and Bombay.

Q. Are you in touch with the exhibitors there?

A. I have met them occasionally.

Q. Do you know whether they find any difficulty in getting Western or Indian films?

A. I don't know about that but I think they don't find any difficulty.

Q. On the whole are you satisfied with the general tone of the films that are shown, both Western and Indian?

A. I think so. There is nothing special that I need complain of.

Q. The cinema is having a good influence on the people?

A. Generally speaking, yes.

Q. Are any of the films which you have seen obscene or objectionable?

A. I don't think so.

Q. I suppose there is nothing to object to which will offend the sense of propriety of the Indian?

A. No, except in one case where I found the love scenes over-done.

Q. Why do you advocate a Central Board?

A. Because I think it would be better that all the imported films should be censored by a Central Board before they are exhibited in this country.

Q. How would you control that?

A. My idea is this: that all films should be censored first before they are sent out to the different provinces and, if necessary, the different provinces may re-censor them, if they find it desirable, to suit local conditions. I know of a play which was banned in the Central Provinces but was passed in Bombay.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: What was it?

A. It was "Keechaka Vadha". It was suggested that it was an innuendo upon Lord Curzon's administration as it was alleged that some of the sentences put into the mouth of Keechaka were Lord Curzon's speeches or some such thing.

- Q. Under what power was that sort of censoring done, do you know?
- A. I think there is an Act of the Government of India called the Dramatic Performances Act and the Local Governments Act; under that Act, I think.
- Q. Have you seen posters connected with the films?
- A. Yes, I have seen some.
- Q. Have you found any of them objectionable in taste?
- A. No, I have not found them objectionable.
- Q. Regarding Indian films, do you think more effort should be put forward to produce more films?
- A. If anything could be done to encourage the Indian film industry, all the better.
- Q. I suppose you would like to have a better pictorial representation and all that sort of thing to make the picture more attractive than at present?
- A. Yes.
- Q. Do you think Government should do anything in that matter?
- A. I should think Government should help indirectly at least, though not directly.
- Q. Supposing Government had educative films, how can they help the industry in any way?
- A. They can lend their films for exhibition. I also think that Government should advance small term loans on favourable terms.
- Q. But that would come under direct assistance?
- A. So far as Government advances or spends money on public utility films then it might be termed direct assistance.
- Q. But how would that help the industry in general?
- A. I don't think it would help very much, but it will mean some assistance.
- Q. What about technical advice and all that? Have you thought about that question?
- A. No, I have no knowledge of that.
- Q. Don't you think that some of the films require technical improvement?
- A. I think some of them need technical improvement.
- Q. Possibly, you have not thought over this question in detail?
- A. No, I have not thought over it.
- Q. On the whole you are satisfied with the censorship of the films now obtaining in this country?
- A. There is no film censorship board as such in this province, but I believe that the censorship is satisfactory.
- Q. Would you like to have a Provincial Board here?
- A. I think it is better to have one here.
- Q. How would you constitute the Board? Would you have nominated or elected members on the Board?
- A. I would give some representation to the members of the Legislative Council, lest the general public may begin to think that it is all a show of the Executive Government. Government may also nominate members to the Committee.
- Q. Would you advocate the representation of trade interest and women's representatives on the Board?
- A. Certainly, I should think so.
- Q. Do you think honorary workers will come forward to do the work?
- A. In the initial stages ladies and gentlemen would be willing to come forward but I don't think that scheme would work well.
- Q. Do you want the Board to be under the Police Commissioner?

- A. I want it to be an independent body. The Police Commissioner should have no controlling authority on this Board. He may be a member of the Board.
- Q. So you think it will be a good thing if the Board is appointed at once?
- A. Yes.
- Q. But you have got only very few cinemas in this province? Are you in favour of having films to be seen by "adults only"?
- A. I don't think any distinction could be made. Suppose you have films only intended for adults, then the little urchins in the house would be all prying about and would try to get at the story in an undesirable manner. It will be creating an unnecessary curiosity in them.
- Q. Don't you think it will be harmful to the eyes of young people to see these pictures?
- A. I would not be able to tell you that. It is not really harmful, that is what I think.
- Q. We are told that there are several shaky pictures in the travelling cinemas which are harmful to the eyes?
- A. I have not seen the travelling cinemas myself.
- Q. You want the cinema houses licensed, but you have not given your reasons?
- A. Just to bring them under the control of the Provincial boards.
- Q. Is it justifiable for the Government to spend any money on this industry?
- A. Not directly.
- Q. What other help can Government give?
- A. Government can give orders for educative films; and if there are any particularly good films Government might take them on rent for exhibition.
- Q. Are you in favour of giving scholarships and sending students abroad?
- A. Yes. Certainly. I have said so in my statement.
- Q. Or would you prefer to bring in experts here to India to teach our students here?
- A. If the latter suggestion is more economical and profitable I should welcome it. I think it would be better if experts are brought here. Because by giving scholarships one can educate only one or two.
- Q. Do you intend to attach these classes to the schools or colleges or school of arts?
- A. The school of arts would be better.
- Q. Or do you advocate any special school?
- A. I would not advocate a special school. I thought it would, perhaps, be more costly if Government were to bring experts from outside into India and were to ask them to stay on here on contract terms for a period of time to teach our boys. That is why I merely suggested in the first instance that scholarships might be given and boys sent out. If on detailed examination of the question it is found that bringing in experts would be cheaper in the long run it would be better to adopt that course.
- Q. Should municipalities and local boards encourage this industry?
- A. They should. But in the Central Provinces and Berar I do not think they can afford to do it. They have no funds.
- Q. In what way should they assist if they had funds?
- A. In the same indirect way as Government. For instance, by showing educative films free of charge. Keeping halls and lending them for such purposes, etc. I am not for direct monetary or any other kind of help. Because after all, this is only a commercial venture and it is not very wise to spend money—tax payers' money—on these things.
- Q. Have you seen Indian films?

A. Yes.

Q. In how many languages have you seen the captions? I mean in one film.

A. Generally in two: either in Gujarati and Mahrathi; or sometimes (of course I am speaking of Indian films) in three languages: English, Marathi and Gujarati or English, Hindi and Gujarati.

Q. You have seen none in Urdu?

A. No.

Q. Perhaps it wouldn't be appreciated here, because the Muhammadan population is very small?

A. Yes. And also many of these Muhammadans are able to understand Hindi.

Mr. Green: I take it, you speak primarily as a social worker?

A. Yes.

Q. You were telling us Amraoti was a commercial centre. I take it that you referred to the cotton market there?

A. Yes.

Q. From what distances do the field labourers and the labour classes for the cotton market come here to get work?

A. You can take it that the field labourer comes from 5 miles and as regards cotton, people from 50 to 80 miles come.

Q. They could not spend more than a rupee?

A. No. That is my personal view.

Q. Are they more or less educated? Can they read vernacular?

A. 50 per cent. of them will be able to read it with difficulty. The majority will not be in a position to read the letters and understand the import. They see the picture and try to connect it by their own imagination.

Chairman: When you are in the cinema house, when the captions appear do not the crowd also read them? I heard them reading the captions yesterday.

A. Some of them try to follow the captions.

Q. Those who are not able to read get the substance of the caption from others?

A. Yes. Some of their friends might explain to them.

Q. We heard the noise in the gallery yesterday.

Mr. Green: I take it that the agricultural class here is fairly well-to-do?

A. Compared with agriculturists in other provinces they are fairly well-to-do.

Q. Your only apprehension is that they are spending too much?

A. That is my view. Dealing with co-operative subjects, I have always come to say that this tendency to enjoy is increasing.

Chairman: Do you mean to say that it does not give them any incentive to work harder?

A. If they are tempted to produce more wealth and then spend it, well and good; but not otherwise.

Q. Don't you think it possible that as the standard of life has become costlier, people will naturally endeavour to find more money to pay for these amusements?

A. Speaking from the point of view of political economy it is true. During the last 10 years their expenditure has increased to such a great extent that it outbids the income. My own personal view is their expenditure during the last 10 years has been nearly doubled. Rural indebtedness has gone up from 850 to 600. Of course, the causes are many. It is not the cinema alone that is responsible. The tendency is rather to spend more than to make more.

Q. If in due course of time that leads to better production, your only apprehension will be removed?

A. I think it will take a very long time before this is achieved.

Mr. Green: Is it your idea that the members of the Central Board should examine all the films themselves?

A. They need not see the whole film. But they should see a synopsis of the film and know what the film is and what it intends to convey.

Q. Must not some one see the whole film? I suppose you would authorise the stipendiary inspectors to do this?

A. Yes. They must be of a good class. They can do the actual examination themselves and if there was any matter of doubt, it could be referred to the full Board and their opinion taken.

Q. The Board can hardly be perpetually in session day to day. The actual amount of censoring in India is already 6½ hours a day. So it would come to stipendiary censors with a controlling board?

A. But these stipendiary people will be representing to the Board all their objections.

Q. How could the trade be represented on the Board? In that case will not the man who represents it be sitting to judge his own affairs or sitting in judgment on the affairs of his rival?

A. If he is drawn from one of these companies it would happen like that.

Q. If he is a trade representative he will have to be drawn from these companies?

A. Someone who may be sufficiently acquainted with the trade conditions may be taken.

Q. Would you be satisfied if Government were to ask the trade to form a representative association among themselves and then to select a representative from that association?

A. I should not mind that.

Written Statement of Mr. S. D. RANADIYE, B.A., LL.B., Pleader, High Court.

1. I have no special knowledge of or connection with the Cinematograph Industry either in India or abroad, but for years I used to be almost a regular visitor to the several cinema houses in Bombay, and have also been visiting the cinemas at Amraoti for the 7-8 years.

2. My experience at Amraoti is that cinemas are more largely attended by the working class, i.e., people who work for daily wages in the several ginning factories, etc. Educated Indians too do attend but the proportion between the former and the latter would be approximately 70: 30. I am of course speaking this of Amraoti which is the premier town of Berar. I may mention in addition that during what is called the "Cotton Season", i.e., during the period from October to March agriculturists from the mofussil who come to sell their cotton at Amraoti also attend the cinema and other theatres in large numbers. I would not call this class "educated." This was not my experience in Bombay where I found the educated class preponderating.

(c) I would put the proportion of children under 14 to adults at 30: 70.

3. It is difficult to say what classes of films are the most popular with Indian audiences because the "Indian audience" is not a homogeneous group; the tastes and likings of one class may differ widely from those of others. Films which appeal very strongly to the so-called "Educated Indian" may fail to create any impression whatever on the masses. Moreover the question of the Province to which the Indian belongs must also be considered. The story of Shivaji the Great Mahratta hero, for instance,

which is so popular in the Deccan and other Marathi speaking parts of India may not give equal inspiration or interest to the residents of Punjab. But in general it may be said that Pauranic or religious films showing the stories of the great Indian epics, Mahabharata and Ramayana are generally popular with Indian audiences.

4. The exhibitors are not able to cater adequately for Indians and this seems to be due to the infant stage of the industry in India. The industry needs nourishing.

5. Indian-produced films depicting Indian life are not readily available to Indians, but this difficulty is gradually disappearing.

(a) Some of the films are of a fairly good quality.

(b) Many of them are very popular at least in the Marathi speaking districts. Following are some of the films which are so popular:—

- (1) "Sinhagad."
- (2) "Kalyān Khajinā."
- (3) "Shāhājān."
- (4) "Bājirāo."
- (5) "Padmini."
- (6) "Sant Tukārām."
- (7) "Lankā Dahan."
- (8) "Krishna Janma."

(c) Ordinarily it is more profitable to show a Western film because it could be had for much less. But in some cases in spite of the heavy costs of the Indian films they have yielded enormous profits.

The films mentioned above in (b) are supposed to have cost a lot to the proprietors of the different cinema houses who screened them and yet they were found to be very profitable.

6. (a) Certainly.

(b) (1) Religious, historic and social in the order I have given.

(b) (2) The order given above is for the illiterate population, the reverse I suppose would do for the educated classes.

7. I suppose there is a difficulty in obtaining suitable films for the British and Indian troops. They naturally desire something very thrilling and sensational always and they do not get it to that extent.

8. The present condition of the industry is anything but satisfactory and needs perfect remodelling.

(b) The main difficulties that seem to hamper the industry are want of scientific training and capital. I would respectfully suggest that Government should send deserving Indians abroad for scientific training and should also subsidise the industry.

9. I understand that good films are not readily obtainable by exhibitors at reasonable prices, the reason apparently being the dearth of good Indian films and the competitive demand for the few that exist.

12. The exhibitors in general seem to be bitterly complaining about the amusement tax, but it is difficult to say as to what extent it really handicaps them.

14. Certainly. There is a very great demand for such films.

15. Conditions in this country are fairly conducive to the development of an Indian film-producing industry. The reasons are:—(1) India abounds in spots of rich scenes. (2) Indian public do realize that the cinema is a great educative agency and demand it as such, and (3) there are Indian youths ready and willing to be trained in the cinema science.

16. There are Indian producers, directors, actors and scenario-writers with enterprise, resource and adaptability but I doubt if they have the sufficient technical knowledge. With proper training they should prove very useful

and the country can then depend on them for a substantial output of films. The means I would suggest are:—

(1) That a school be opened here in India for those who want to go in for the line and deserving scholars who complete their course at the school be sent abroad for higher training.

17. There is no reason why sufficient capital should not come forth.

18. I would not advocate any legislative action. It would be forcing a thing from the wrong end. People are averse to the idea. Government can, however, give an incentive to private enterprise by holding out certain facilities.

19. I am told that owing to labour being trained, and materials more handy cost of film production in foreign countries is less than here, but I have not been able to collect and compare actual and exact figures.

20. My proposal to start a school in India, to give foreign scholarships and other facilities to the industry do involve expenditure from Government funds. But, having regard to the needs of the country, I think such expenditure is perfectly justifiable.

21. I am in favour of the creation of a State agency, provided the department is included in the list of transferred departments, i.e., if it is controlled by the Ministers.

22. I don't think.

(a), (b), (c) I don't think.

23. (a) Cinema pictures can be successfully used to a great extent for this purpose.

(b) The various Governments should include mutual films of this kind in their respective educative programme and thus co-operate.

24. (a) Love stories of the stock type do have an unhealthy effect on boys and the screening of the adventures of brigands is at times responsible for the imitation of such crime.

(b) It cannot be said that there is a general circulation of immoral or criminally suggestive films.

(c) Films showing love-stories depicting elopements, etc., are harmful to boys under 16, as screening of the incidents of housebreak, chloroforming, incendiarism, etc., is harmful to the uneducated and half-educated masses. The former spoil the physical and mental health of the boys and soil their morals whereas the latter may instigate some to copy the incidents.

(d) Censorship it appears is fairly adequate both in the case of (1) and (2).

(e) None.

(f) I know of a boy of the age of 16 who having continuously seen some of the stock love stories attempted to write some himself. He was at a college then. A year or two after that he gave up his studies and took service. This was about 7—8 years ago. He never made any success as a story writer. Nor did he keep up his health. He is earning about Rs. 40 per mensem in the office of a Railway Company. I know only of one instance of housebreaking in Amraoti wherein methods preached in the cinema theatre were practised on a private house by some robbers.

25. I do.

26. (a) Care must be taken.

(b) I cannot quote any instance.

27. (a) I don't think. It is a fact that films representing Western life are not perfectly intelligible to the uneducated Indian but I don't think any undesirable results follow from this.

(b) I had heard and read about some such films having been exhibited in America. To my knowledge they were not reproduced in India.

28. The answer to question 24 covers this.

29. Health films describing venereal diseases, etc., and sex films may be certified as for "adults only".

30. No.

31. Yes.

32. I am not fully conversant with the system of censorship in this Province.

33. Censorship exercised judiciously should not lead to the result contemplated in (a), (b) and (c).

34. I would suggest the establishment of a Central Board in addition to the Provincial Boards, as the latter are necessary in view of the varying needs of the several Provinces and the former would act as a sort of controlling and connecting agency in the case of the Provincial Boards.

(2) I don't think that this will cause any inconvenience to trade.

(3) The Central Board should be formed of members representing all the Provinces.

(4) It may be stationed at Delhi.

(c) Provincial Boards will be subordinate to the Central Board, but they will have the right to say what their Province wants.

(d) The Boards will have to be financed by Government.

35. (a) Yes.

(b) No.

36. (a) The present system prevailing in Bombay and Calcutta under which films are ordinarily examined by Inspectors subordinate to the Board is not in my opinion very satisfactory as the majority of Inspectors are not sufficiently well qualified for the work. The main qualification necessary is close acquaintance with all classes of Indian audience and a sufficient knowledge of their social life. Without this it is not possible to determine what kind of films will do them real good.

(b) Yes.

40. Yes.

41. Yes, in the case of some films.

42. Trade representatives should be associated with the Board of Directors.

44. Public bodies in Berar cannot do much in this respect except, perhaps, bodies like the Berar Co-operative Institute or the "Teacher's Union", if they are given a hand in the matter. But the Press can do a lot by offering a healthy criticism and making suggestions from time to time.

Oral Evidence of Mr. S. D. RANADIYE, B.A., LL.B., Pleader, High Court, Amraoti, on Tuesday, the 7th February 1928, at Nagpur.

Chairman: You are the Honorary Secretary of the Berar Co-operative Institute?

A. Yes.

Q. You are Secretary of the Central Bank also?

A. Yes.

Q. And also you are Secretary of the City Library?

A. Yes.

Q. So you have got several honorary capacities?

A. There is one other thing also. I am Secretary of the Boy Scout Association.

Q. Do you frequently visit the cinemas?

A. Yes. At least I did in Bombay more than I have been doing in Berar. For the past 7 or 8 years I have been visiting cinemas. Here also I see them.

Q. So you are fairly conversant with the films which are shown?

A. Yes.

Q. How often do they show Indian films in Amraoti?

A. Three years ago the proportion of Indian films to Western films was 1 to 3.

Q. In both the theatres?

A. Yes.

Q. Does any one theatre show more Indian films than the other?

A. One did for some time, but not now. There was one Dutt Cinema Company which was screening Indian films in larger numbers. But it is no longer working.

Q. Why?

A. Probably the proprietor ran short of money. He had some loss elsewhere and so he sold the concern.

Q. How many are working now?

A. Only two.

Q. Do both of them show regularly every week?

A. Not regularly. Formerly they were showing regularly but this year they are not. This is what I understand.

Q. They show Western films now?

A. Those too they don't show regularly. Formerly they used to screen two shows but now there is only one. And that too is not run every day. On some days in the week both the theatres do not screen anything at all.

Q. That means they are not getting sufficient remuneration to live on?

A. My idea is that this is due to the presence of a very popular dramatic company which is now staging at Amraoti. The name of that company is "The Gandharva Company". This company attracts the people from other houses.

Q. So you say the stage attracts the people?

A. Yes. This company is a very good company and they are from Bombay and Poona side. After a very long absence they have come here. They were not here for many years. They came here about 4 months ago and they are leaving very shortly.

Q. So this is a temporary suspension. Before this company came both the cinemas were open continuously?

A. Yes. They were.

Q. So this is a temporary set back on account of a counter attraction?

A. Yes.

Q. Does the dramatic troupe play in the same house?

A. Yes.

Q. What is your opinion regarding the effect of the cinema on the public?

A. I should think it is very useful.

Q. You say they learn a lot?

A. Yes. They do. And lot of what they learn is very useful.

Q. Any evil also?

A. Not to the extent to make a row. Everything good must have also some evil and in that sense there may be some evil, but it is negligible. Between the two things, the stage and the cinema, I would invariably prefer the cinema.

Mr. Green: You mean that the cinema is more innocent?

A. Yes. And more instructive too.

Chairman: You mention "Love stories of the stock type do have an unhealthy effect on boys". What do you mean by stock type? Do you mean ordinary western love-making stories?

A. There are even some Eastern stories, which have been written on the model of Western stories without any degree of success. They do not create any good effect on the boys.

Q. You mean stories that are sometimes seen in the books which are of this sort?

A. Yes. They are screened very often.

Q. It looked as if your answer to question No. 24 (a) meant the usual type now shown dealing with love stories have an unhealthy effect on boys. Is that what you mean?

A. It is not very generally the case. I have said that "it cannot be said that there is a general circulation of immoral or criminally suggestive films. Films showing love-stories depicting elopements, etc., are harmful to boys."

Q. Just now you told us that the film is not harmful to the people?

A. It is not. There may be some. In general they are not.

Q. This sentence [answer to question 24 (a)] rather leaves the matter in doubt.

A. I am sorry if it is worded like that but it was not my intention. I would clear it.

Q. Do the usual films dealing with love stories have an unhealthy effect on boys?

A. Usually we do not get such films. Love stories of the stock type are not screened very often. Occasionally love stories shown in the films have a harmful effect on boys.

Q. You have referred to a boy. What is it he did?

A. He was a student in the college. He began to write love stories himself and I did not find them to be on original lines. They were more or less like stories in the cinema.

Q. How can you say that the cinema was responsible for that?

A. I cannot say the cinema is responsible. But my acquaintance with the boy led me to believe so. I have seen him visiting particular stories of a particular type very often. He always liked to see these love stories only. So it might have influenced him in that direction.

Q. What was he reading in?

A. He was a student in the college. In the first class I believe. He had just passed his Matric. He never took his degree. As a story writer also he was not a success. If he had been a success I should not have cited this instance at all. He is now serving in some office in a Railway Company on a very poor pay. He is getting I think Rs. 40. He did not keep up his health also.

Q. What do you mean by this? Did his going to the cinema affect his health?

A. It did not leave him with a robust temperament and mind.

Q. He became an imaginative man?

A. Yes. Long before his age he was a "gentleman."

Q. Was he also reading books?

A. Yes. He was not a good reader also. He used to read these 6d. novels.

Q. You mean these trashy novels?

A. Yes.

Q. Why should not the change be due to this?

A. It might be. It must be a combined result of both.

Q. That is the only instance you have got of the cinema having a tendency to harm the people of this country?

A. Yes. That is the only instance I particularly remember. There may be a few more but, as I have said, this is not general.

Q. Otherwise it has a very healthy effect?

A. Yes.

Q. You say people like Indian films more than Western films?

A. It is very difficult to say so. The tastes of the several parts of India are different. There are so many classes of people. It is not a homogeneous mass. What may appeal to an educated Indian may fail to appeal to the masses.

Q. What about the bulk of the people?

A. They prefer Indian films. But even then there is what I should call "provincial taste." What may be appealing in Deccan or Madras may not appeal to the people in the Punjab. A film that may appeal to the Marathi speaking people, for example, may fail to appeal to the people in the Punjab or Madras. It is only the epic stories of Ramayana and Mahabharata which may be said to be generally popular with the Indians.

Q. In the Indian films which you have seen, have you seen any social dramas or stories from the Bombay side?

A. I have seen some of them.

Q. Are they being shown here?

A. They are never shown here.

Q. Such stories as "The Nurse," "Tainted Virtue," etc.?

A. They have not so far been shown here.

Q. It is not from any experience of such things you say that such stories would not be popular here?

A. I don't say they won't be popular. I only say that on account of the provincial tastes, historic films particularly, which were popular in the Deccan and Marathi speaking districts, which had local interest, might not be popular in non-Marathi districts. Social films will be popular all round, I think. Especially Bombay films, I think, they will understand. The educated classes will appreciate this much more.

Q. What do you think is required to be done to help the Indian film industry?

A. I would suggest that the Government should subsidise to a certain extent and have some good films shown to the people free of charge.

Q. You mean entertainment films or educational films?

A. Educational films.

Q. By giving orders for producing educational films?

A. Yes. That is my idea.

Q. You also suggest that some scholarships should be given.

A. In the first instance that may be done. But it would be better to have a school here and train our men here. It may not be possible to send a large number of men every year by way of scholarships. Instead of that, in order to train more people, experts can be brought here. When I made the suggestion in my evidence first, I thought that people can first be sent out and when they returned after having obtained the necessary training they could be made to instruct other boys.

Q. Do you think a sufficient number of boys will be forthcoming if a school were opened?

A. Yes. One school for the whole of India for education in the cinema.

Q. It will be such a long distance away. Where would you locate it?

A. If they were to be sent out of the country the distance will be greater still.

Q. But in that case you have boys who desire to be sent. In this case you will have to find boys for the school.

A. I think boys from all parts of India will be forthcoming. For example, the school might be stationed at Delhi.

Q. What scope is there for these boys? What will they do after getting training in the school?

A. They will be apprentices in the various companies that handle this industry.

Q. Do you think there is such a scope, say, for 100 boys in the year?

A. Yes. They can be trained like that till the industry is sufficiently developed.

Q. In what subject would you like to have them taught?

A. In subjects connected with the cinema. Say, they can be taught about public health, hygiene, social life, and scenario writing too.

Q. So that they may be able to write scenarios; is that your object?

A. Yes.

Q. You want to train them in photography, acting, direction, etc.?

A. Yes. My impression is that the photography is not up to the mark, nor the scenario writing.

Q. Cannot your object be achieved by sending some half a dozen students abroad every year for training?

A. Between the two, I prefer the cheaper method.

Q. So that it may be gradually introduced?

A. Yes.

Q. Would you advocate the establishment of Government studios for educational films?

A. They could establish their own studios.

Q. But you want to give subsidies to existing companies?

A. That may be done in addition to having Government studios.

Q. If they have their own studios, why should they give their orders to others?

A. Their own studios may not be quite sufficient.

Q. You think they will have more work to turn out than they can do?

A. Yes. I would suggest that primarily they should have their own central studio.

Q. For educational films in a broad sense, you prefer that Government should have their own experts?

A. Yes, who will be available for giving training or instruction to private studios.

Q. You think that is better?

A. Yes, on the whole I think that is the better course to adopt.

Q. Are you satisfied with the censorship?

A. On the whole I am. But in our province there is no censorship board.

Q. I refer to the censorship of films?

A. It is fairly good.

Q. You don't want to make any improvements?

A. I would suggest that the standard of the present inspectors be raised.

Q. What about the central board that you advocate? What have they to do?

A. They have to exercise general control over the provincial boards, co-ordinating their work and sitting as an appellate authority if they differ.

Q. Also be an advisory body to Government in the cinema department?

A. Yes, that is my object. It will be a controlling and also a connecting agency between the various boards.

Q. Also in the matter of co-ordinating the work of the Government studios if they are established and distributing the films among the various provincial boards?

A. Yes, that will be the work allotted to the central board.

Q. But do you want to have provincial boards for censorship?

A. Yes, we do.

Q. Had you at any time in your province to complain about any particular films that it should not have been passed?

A. We have never had any such occasion.

Q. Do you think money should be spent for encouraging the Indian film industry?

A. I think so.

Q. What about the central board that you advocate? What are they to do? You no doubt know a good deal about youths. Don't you think when they reach the age of puberty, there is apt to be a sort of effervescence in their minds?

A. Yes.

Q. And in certain cases if they are not properly controlled, the result will be bad?

A. Yes.

Q. You told us an instance of a youth who was badly affected. Is any thing of that sort happening often?

A. I do not think it is general.

Q. You don't think then that ordinarily the films are really harmful?

A. I don't think so, except in exceptional cases where people are particularly sensitive.

Q. You think then that pre-disposition is primarily responsible?

A. Yes.

Q. And that the cinema by itself could not do any harm?

A. Some other things may also affect them; the cinema by itself is not the cause; it may be one of the influences.

Q. I noticed you told the Chairman that there is a tendency in Indian writers to write love-stories, etc., with a more romantic outlook. You consider this is not due to the cinema?

A. If I compare the English love-stories with the vernacular love-stories, I find that the latter miss the spirit, and are practically copies.

Q. Anyway you think they are working in a foreign medium and that the novels are more or less translations?

A. Yes. They are not even very correct or accurate translations, and they miss the spirit.

Q. Are they meant to represent Indian life?

A. They are a *via media*; there is an attempt to meet both. I come from the Marathi districts. I find most of the Marathi stories that are being written to-day are not true to Indian life and do not appeal to the Indian people even. They are more or less the same as the English novels, with only the names changed.

Q. You presume the practice will die out?

A. I think it must. Between an average Indian love-story and an average English love-story, I should certainly like the English one which will be more natural more true to life and more appealing.

Q. It is a bit hard to understand. I thought, as an Indian, you would prefer Indian love-stories?

A. I say that, only so far as the Indian stories that are produced are concerned.

Q. Are you generally satisfied with the type of the Western films?

A. Generally there is nothing wrong about them.

Q. But the word "generally" suggests that there is some reservation in your mind?

A. At times I am not satisfied with some of the Western films. I could not appreciate them.

Q. What is the particular kind of thing that you do not like in them?

A. I think that things are much overdone.

Q. Particularly the love-scenes? Are they indecent?

A. Not actually indecent; I should call it a bit artificial.

Chairman: You would like to see such things cut out, if possible. Don't you think there must be some exaggeration on the screen, especially where action takes the place of words. The action should therefore be more expressive?

A. There is a certain amount of expression which satisfies our normal cravings, but it should not be overdone, I say.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: You have said that subsidies should be given by Government to this industry? From where is this money to come, from what funds?

A. I am not able to give a reply to that question.

Q. I am told that the Government here have no money to spend?

A. They must find their way out, I think.

Q. Suppose they levy an entertainment tax, would you agree to that?

A. I would.

Q. You will agree provided it is spent on educational purposes?

A. Yes, for the encouragement of this industry.

Q. You are the Secretary of the Library in Amraoti?

A. Yes.

Q. Is it a pretty big hall?

A. Yes.

Q. Are there any other public halls in Amraoti?

A. There is one.

Q. Would it be available for any travelling cinemas?

A. Yes, certainly. I will be glad to give the library.

Q. Probably for a small fee?

A. Yes.

Q. You think such loans of halls can be had in other towns also?

A. I am not aware of that; so far as Amraoti is concerned, it is always possible to have a hall there. I should think there would be no difficulty in getting halls in other towns also.

Q. You think, if travelling cinemas are started by the Government such halls will be available?

A. Even the municipalities for the matter of that will be glad to put their halls at the disposal of the Government; but I cannot make an authoritative statement on that matter.

Q. Is there no other way of finding the finance? Why should not you as the Secretary of the Co-operative Society arrange to have a Cinema Industry Society?

A. It is very difficult to appeal to the agriculturists. Further this does not come within the purview of the Co-operative Societies Act which expressly lays down that the Co-operative Societies are meant to help agriculturists in agriculture.

Q. If you think of it, there will be so many coming forward, I think?

A. They won't. I do not think they will.

Q. How many societies have you got?

A. The Amraoti Central Bank has got about 120 societies under its control.

Q. One more will make it 121 instead of 120?

A. The fear is that all will be eliminated, because already they are not working very well. If we start this society, it will not be a success.

Q. Why are the people so shy in putting their money in these things?

A. They are not exactly shy; but the average cultivator feels that if he puts his capital into this, he will be going from bad to worse.

Q. You won't try to start one for the present?

A. Not with the societies now working under the Co-operative Bank.

Q. But what about a new society?

A. The people are very apathetic, and they won't come.

Q. You are not in favour of any legislation at all?

A. No.

Q. Suppose it is decided to have a quota of Indian films shown with other films in all the theatres in India, surely there ought to be some legislation?

A. Not necessarily. That could be done without legislation.

Q. Do you mean to say that those who show Western films will show Indian films also?

A. If the central board requires them to do it, they will.

Q. There is nothing to force them to do that?

A. The board may be given some powers.

Q. Then in any case legislation will be necessary?

A. To that extent we can have legislation.

Q. Why do you advocate a Central Board at Delhi?

A. Because Delhi is the capital town. Moreover, the other provinces should not quarrel between themselves if it is to be at Madras or Bombay or elsewhere.

Q. Why do you prefer Delhi? Bombay will suit quite as well?

A. In case the Board has to communicate very often with the Central Government, Delhi would be more suitable.

Q. You say that the Bombay board should censor the Western films only for the Bombay Presidency, then again they should be censored in Central Provinces and again in Calcutta?

A. Yes, or the Bombay board may communicate the result to the other boards who may approve that or not, or they may censor the films again.

Q. Why should we not have the Central Board at Bombay?

A. I would have no objection to that; absolutely no objection.

Written Statement of Mr. P. B. KALE, B.Sc., Asso.A.I.E.E., Managing Partner, Union Cinema Company, Nagpur and Jubbulpore, dated the 23rd January 1928.

1 I have been connected with this industry since the year 1921 as an exhibitor and have now theatres, both in Nagpur and Jubbulpore, which cater for different kinds of audiences.

2. (a) We have to select pictures, which appeal to Europeans, Anglo-Indians and educated Indians. Then again, we have to choose pictures, which will be liked by illiterate Indians, i.e., by the masses. Of the educated classes, we find that they like foreign pictures, as well as some brands of Indian pictures; while the illiterate class likes mostly mythological, historical and some Indian social pictures, thrilling serials and acrobatic foreign comedies.

(b) The percentage of educated Indians frequenting cinemas is more or less constant; while that of the illiterate masses is imperceptibly increasing. During the special Indian pictures, the increase is more marked than during the ordinary Indian pictures. This is more obvious in Nagpur; while in Jubbulpore, the audience is steady throughout the season.

The composition of an average cinema-audience differs in our different houses in the same city, *e.g.*, in Buldi Picture House, we have a cosmopolitan audience for programmes from Thursdays to Saturdays, which are invariably high class foreign dramas—mostly American and a few British or Continental.

For Indian programmes, in the same theatre, we have a mixed audience of educated and uneducated Indians. Also a very large number of Indian women witness Indian pictures. Then for serials, the audience is mostly of students and illiterate masses.

In the Raghuvir Theatre, for foreign dramas, we find a few educated Indians and a small illiterate audience; but such pictures, as a rule, are a failure in this locality; serials also do not attract the same audience, as they do in Buldi Picture House; while for choice Indian pictures, the houses are invariably full.

The same case applies to our two theatres at Jubbulpore and need not be detailed out.

(c) It is very difficult to tell the percentage of children attending the cinemas. For a regular foreign programme, hardly 5 per cent. of the audience consists of children under 14; while for Indian pictures, the percentage is more, but does not exceed ordinarily over 10 to 12 per cent. For some of the healthy comedy programmes, which are specially suitable for children—we generally arrange special matinee shows—where major portion of the audience consists of children and about 50 per cent. of that portion are under 14 years of age.

PART I.

3. Regarding the popularity of Indian pictures, mythological pictures, even to-day, are most favourite in my district. Next come the historical pictures, followed by some social pictures, featuring particular stars.

4. As a rule, we have Indian programmes every week and as most of our audience is Indian, either educated or uneducated, we cater adequately for their taste, with an exception of 3 days at the Buldi Picture House, where our policy has been to cater for the taste of Europeans, Anglo-Indians and educated Indians. The standard of films for these 3 days is kept very high.

5. We had so far no difficulty in obtaining Indian pictures depicting Indian life and some of the pictures are, no doubt, very popular and of good quality, *e.g.*, pictures featuring Miss Ruby Myers, popularly known as Miss Sulochana, and also pictures like "Krishna Janma," "Kalia Mardan," "Singharh," "Netaji Palker," etc. It is certainly more paying to exhibit Indian pictures than foreign films in our locality, with the exception of one of our theatres at Jubbulpore, which solely caters for the taste of Europeans and British Troops.

6. (a) At present, I am of opinion that Indian pictures produced in India by Indian actors, depicting Indian life from national literature, history and mythology as well as social problems, would be more popular with Indian audiences than the prevalent foreign films; but there is a strong tendency, especially among the educated Indians, growing in favour of foreign films of high standard.

(b) The educated classes still have a liking for historical and Indian social pictures, while the illiterate masses like as above said mythological, historical and some social pictures.

7. So far, we had not experienced any difficulty in obtaining suitable films to show to British Troops. For Indian Troops, we have no experience, as in spite of our attractive concessions, we could not succeed in inducing the officers of the Indian troops to allow rank and file to witness shows of suitable pictures for them. We do not know exactly what were the difficulties in the way, but the result was there. British troops generally like "Western" dramas and comedies.

8. (a) There is much room for improvement in the production of Indian pictures. The first and foremost improvement, in my opinion, would be

"titling" of Indian pictures. As these are usually liked by Indians, I am personally against giving English titles to such pictures. Again, titles are given in two or three languages, which is most exasperating and takes a good deal of the length of the film. Hindustani titles, in Devnagari character, should be a standard for the whole of India; but probably if producers have 3 or 4 copies of a picture, then they should have titles in different languages for each copy, suitable for different parts of India.

Second improvement is the choice of actors for different rôles.

Thirdly, the practice of male actors, playing the parts of females, should be entirely discontinued.

The "get-up" of scenes and actors is quite often awfully neglected, *e.g.*, painting of faces is very badly noticeable in some pictures.

Fifthly, monotonous dancing scenes are a bad taste, and attention to dresses and selection of costumes is very essential.

9. Distribution of Indian pictures at present is quite satisfactory, if not ideal. Good films are generally available by exhibitors at reasonable prices; but sometimes monopolists, whether Corporations or private individuals, demand exorbitant rentals, *e.g.*, in one or two instances, we have paid 55 to 65 per cent. of the gross takings on some foreign pictures, after having given a minimum guarantee.

There is no doubt that some people are trying to monopolise the supply of foreign pictures; but I do not think that such attempts will eventually be crowned with success. For some time, it may bring hardship on independent exhibitors; but the difficulty is not so great as is imagined. Leaving aside one firm, who is trying to monopolise the film industry of India, there are importers who have got equally good stuff and who have been always ready to help independent exhibitors, at reasonable rentals.

10. With the exceptions of big cities like Bombay, Calcutta, etc., there is no such system existing as "first run" or "key theatres".

We do not think that it will be advisable to arrange trade exhibitions of pictures, unless we have distributing centres in each province, which may not be, in the present state of industry, advisable from commercial point of view.

11. We do not think it is necessary to preview films; but if any agency of critics, having neither interest nor control of either film production or importation, be started it would serve as a good guide in selection in absence of continuous Indian press criticism.

13. We do not think that special protection is necessary for indigenous production. At present, the indigenous industry is sufficiently thriving and further protection by enhancement of customs and tariff will mean increased rentals for both indigenous as well as foreign films and the industry will start suffering at the exhibitors' end.

14. For further prosperity in the industry, what one requires is the increased number of theatres throughout the country, say, *e.g.*, a theatre for every town of 15,000 population, and these theatres will only increase in number, if producers and importers are willing to offer co-operation by way of reduction in the rate of rentals. I am not sure whether exhibition of agricultural, educational and other propaganda films, by Government or semi-Government agencies, would help the growth of the industry in this country; but the exhibition of such films is bound to help the movement of mass education and indirectly such exhibitions may create taste in the masses for seeing pictures.

15. The conditions in India are ideal for film-producing industry on a large scale: the climate, the light-effects, natural scenery and availability of old and historical buildings and cheaper wages.

16. As the conditions prevail at present, there is much to be desired in the technical staff concerned with this industry, and in the beginning we may have to import covenanted technical men, such as directors, who will train actors and actresses and who will imbibe enterprise, resource and adaptability into those who are working under them. Scenario-writers we have got.

17. So far as capital is concerned, we have no misgivings in the matter.

18. If Government at all decide to give an incentive and encouragement, they should do so, not by any resolution of the Legislative Councils, but the help should be more direct and should consist of an opening of a central school for the training of directors, actors, actresses, scenario-writers, managers, advertisers, title-writers and all such men connected with the industry.

19. We have no detailed figures to compare the cost of production; but it is generally believed that the cost of production in India is very very cheap as compared with that in foreign countries for similar type of production.

20. The opening of the proposed school would naturally involve a good amount of capital expenditure, as well as current expenditure. The school would preferably be situated near Bombay, say Lonavla, as Bombay is to-day the centre of Indian film-producing industry.

The course at the school should be on the following subjects:—

- (1) Production.
- (2) Acting.
- (3) Scenario-writing.
- (4) Title-writing.
- (5) Technique.
- (6) Photography.
- (7) Theatre management.

This school should be open for students from all parts of India and should admit both boys and girls of the country. The cinema industry is bound to make rapid strides in the future and the youth of the country will find a new opening of livelihood. I am of opinion that cinema-goers pay an entertainment tax with the idea of getting better and better entertainment, and if this tax or a portion of it at least is spent in the maintenance of the school, the public may well expect to see better Indian pictures.

(b) Entertainment tax, collected at present from different provinces, would be more than sufficient to run such a school; however, provinces, where no such tax exists, would be only too willing to pay this tax, once they are assured that the tax or a portion of it is going to maintain a school for the cinema industry, the product of which will surely give them better and better pictures and the tax-payers may be satisfied that they will get some return for the tax they are now paying.

21. I am personally against State Agency for the management of the film industry in any of its aspects. Even as it is, the censorship is rigid and its code varies from province to province. The examples of such vagary have been already brought before the Board. The agency of distributing pictures must be as free as possible from Government control.

The talk of indecent pictures is advanced by interested parties. It happens many a time that good pictures, whether American or British, are banned through the influence of a rival importer. Moral standards, no doubt, may differ from country to country and province to province. After all, moral standards, with the exception of bare truths, are not steady and vary from day to day and under the garb of morality, censors should not ban some of the finest pictures of intellectual treat from the eyes of the Indian population. On account of these views, I strongly oppose the idea of any Government control.

There should be an appellate authority, or what is termed as Central Censor Board, before which a film owner may represent his case, if he has been done injustice to by his local Censor Board.

22. We do not think that by participating in the movement of British Empire films, the Indian film industry would develop. Our experience is that

we do not get good British pictures. What we get is more or less depicting the glorious side of British militarism. Certainly, we want far different pictures than these if you want to educate the masses. We want commonplace pictures of habits and customs of different nations. The foreign films we get to-day fitly answer the requirements. Of course, we have no objection to exhibit British pictures, if they fulfil these requirements, but to lay down a fast rule on the basis of a certain percentage of total number of pictures exhibited would tend to kill the exhibition part of the industry.

Further, the result of making any special efforts for the encouragement of British films would simply mean dumping of British pictures on Indian exhibitors. England has, so far, either produced third-rate pictures or spectacular pictures, showing Imperialistic superiority. Moreover, Indian productions, we doubt, may not get the same chances and encouragements or showing their pictures in other parts of the Empire. If British pictures of the nature of "The Rat" or "The Triumph of the Rat" are available at reasonable prices, Indian exhibitors would not have any objection to show such pictures.

23. From an educational point of view, it is equally important to learn the conditions, resources and habits of the peoples outside the British Commonwealth of Nations. This we already know to a certain extent. The films that are now being imported into this country depict, more or less, conditions and habits of people in all the lands of the world.

PART II.

24. (a) From our experience for the last 7 years, we do not think that crime has increased in this part of the country on account of the cinemas.

(b) Further, we do not know of any general circulation of immoral and criminally suggestive films.

(d) The censorship is already more adequate than is necessary and we do not suggest any change in this direction.

25. If at all censorship should be more liberal in this direction than what, it is to-day, what India to-day wants is the knowledge of how people in the other countries live and what are their habits. This is one way of bringing India on the lines of thought and living of the Western world. This tendency will create an atmosphere of better understanding of the West and East.

26. Further, films on different religions should be allowed to be more freely circulated than heretofore. It will surely have the effect of understanding each other in a better and friendly spirit.

29. The certificates of certain films marked "For Adults Only" is a good thing from exhibitors' point of view. On such films the exhibitor is bound to make more money and yet the film may not contain even a scene or a word of immoral life.

30. We are not in favour of permitting all children for all shows between certain years, say, from 3 to 10. It would be better if children do not see pictures depicting relations of man and woman.

Regarding Censorship.—The present control of the Board of Film Censors at the importing stations, viz., Bombay, Calcutta, Madras and Rangoon, is already over-strict and further legislation in the direction would adversely tell upon the industry. As I have already mentioned, I am of opinion that there should be one Central Board of Film Censors, consisting of,—among others,—three members interested in the industry—one exhibitors' nominee, one Indian film producers' nominee and third, importers' nominee.

The Board may be situated at either Bombay or Calcutta, preferably in Bombay. Films once passed by the Central Board should be allowed to be exhibited by all Local Governments, except when a Local Government thinks that a particular film may disturb the peaceful and harmonious relations between different communities of the province.

Oral Evidence of Mr. P. B. KALE, B.Sc., Asso.A.I.E.E., Managing Partner, Union Cinema Company, Nagpur and Jubbulpore, on Tuesday, the 7th February 1928.

Chairman: Mr. Kale, you are running a cinema house in Nagpur and another in Jubbulpore?

A. There are three in Nagpur and two in Jubbulpore.

Q. Three out of how many in Nagpur?

A. At present there are four, but one was closed down temporarily on account of plague.

Q. There was another, the Craddock?

A. Yes, and Madans also used to come in the season.

Q. But they don't come now. For how many years have they not come?

A. Only this year they did not come.

Q. Are all the four here working at a profit?

A. Yes, all of them are working practically at a profit.

Q. How many shows are given in a day?

A. It varies with the pictures. For English dramas we have only two shows in a day and for Indian pictures three shows and sometimes even four. Generally three, but sometimes four, and we have a good crowd.

Q. For how many days in the week?

A. Two days in the Buldi and for five days in the other theatres.

Q. That is for Indian films?

A. Yes.

Q. For Western films?

A. Generally one day in the city.

Q. Which theatre pays more in box office receipts?

A. The Buldi Picture House at present.

Q. How often do you show Indian pictures there?

A. For two days in the week.

Q. And for the other five days?

A. Western films for three days and other foreign dramas or serials for the other two days, also cow-boy films, acrobatic films, etc.

Q. Take the Buldi theatre; which gives you greater daily receipts, Indian films?

A. Yes, Indian films.

Q. You get more box office receipts from the Indian films than from Western films?

A. Yes, that is the case.

Q. Then why don't you show Indian films on more days?

A. The population is so composed that if I show Indian films for more than two days, the average receipts will drop. The Buldi Picture House is in a cosmopolitan locality.

Q. Suppose you show a different film?

A. Even then it will drop, because they cannot afford to see two pictures in a week.

Q. You mean the people who have a taste for Indian pictures cannot afford to go for more than two nights?

A. No.

Q. So that you exhaust them with two days' show, three or four times?

A. Generally three times, only occasionally four times.

Q. Do you find any difficulty in getting Indian pictures?

A. I do not find any difficulty at all.

Q. You never suffered for your programme for want of an Indian picture?

A. No, I never suffered except when it was caught up in the railway carriage or in some accident.

Q. Or what basis do you hire Indian films; do you buy them?

A. No, we hire them, on the percentage basis.

Q. What percentage?

A. It varies from picture to picture. The maximum we pay to the producer is 50 per cent. and the minimum is 40 per cent.

Q. Who pays the advertisement charges?

A. We bear them.

Q. They don't bear any expense?

A. No.

Mr. Green: They insist on a minimum guarantee?

A. Sometimes they do, but that is very seldom.

Chairman: What is the minimum they want?

A. Rs. 750 for a week's run.

Q. Seven days' run?

A. Yes, in all the three theatres.

Q. You adopt the same procedure in Jubbulpore?

A. At present I have let out one of my theatres on lease there to a European, and the other city theatre I am running myself.

Q. What do you do in your city theatres?

A. We show mostly Indian pictures there.

Q. What does your lessee do?

A. He is practically catering for British troops.

Q. So he shows only Western films?

A. Also high class dramas.

Q. Yesterday you suddenly changed the programme to an Indian film from a Western film?

A. Yes.

Q. That gave you only Rs. 72 receipts?

A. I think about Rs. 65.

Q. You would have had a bigger audience if you had the regular run?

A. Yes, there would have been a better audience. For that very picture which was run on last Tuesday, I had about Rs. 350 collection for three shows.

Mr. Green: "Sri Krishna"?

A. "Muraliwalla."

Chairman: When was that produced, do you know?

A. In 1926.

Q. This is the first time it came to Nagpur?

A. This is the second time it came here.

Q. You showed it in your theatre before?

A. Yes.

Q. How did you happen to select the picture, the Western picture (Answer of the Sea) that you had on your programme yesterday.

A. I got it from the Universal.

Q. How long has it been in circulation?

A. I do not know.

Q. Where else was it shown, do you know?

A. I do not know.

- Q. You have not followed that?
 A. No; generally we ask for the pictures and they give us.
 Q. Did you select this?
 A. Yes.
 Q. You were not induced to select it, say, by any advertisement?
 A. No; they generally give us the names and out of the list, we select a certain picture.
 Q. You have no information as to when it was censored in Bombay?
 A. I have no information. I can give it from the certificate.
 Q. Can you send for it through the 'phone?
 A. Oh, yes.
 Q. Have you any press notices of that film?
 A. No.
 Q. The Universal sent you the catalogue?
 A. Generally they used to send; but this film is not on the regular catalogue of the Universal. I believe it is some other brand which was purchased by the Universal and circulated.
 Q. You do not know whether it was shown in Bombay or anywhere else?
 A. I do not know, but it must have been.
 Q. When did you show it first?
 A. On Sunday. We have been showing it on Sunday and Monday.
 Q. I should like to have the attendance on Sunday and Monday, i.e., by classes, with the receipts.
 A. I can supply you that.
 Q. Was it advertised anywhere under the head "Undine"? Is the name changed?
 Mr. Green: The certificate shows that it was originally "Undine".
 Chairman: Your advertisement in the newspapers shows "Undine" in brackets. Then, you cannot give us information as to the history of the film?
 A. No.
 Q. Do you know the country of origin of that film?
 A. I do not know. I can find it out, I think. The actors seem to be all American actors.
 Q. You say it is not in the catalogue circulated by them?
 A. No, it is not there.
 Q. It is your choice, not their own, I suppose?
 A. I cannot tell you definitely anything on this point, because the person who makes the bookings is unfortunately out of town at present.
 Q. You find exhibition a paying proposition, I suppose?
 A. Yes, if it is properly carried on.
 Q. In your case it has been a paying proposition, anyhow?
 A. Yes.
 Q. For the last six or seven years?
 A. Yes.
 Q. Were these theatres run by any other before you took them up?
 A. I started them myself.
 Q. So also in Jubbulpore?
 A. Both of them were being run by other companies and they failed and I had to step in.
 Q. I suppose you are an independent exhibitor.
 A. I am.
 Q. Not connected with any circuit?

- A. No.
 Q. Pathé, Globe and others, you are not bound to take pictures from any one party? You are at liberty to choose what you like?
 A. Yes.
 Q. And you do not find any difficulty?
 A. No.
 Q. They do not force things which you do not want.
 A. Generally they do not. Sometimes I do not get the particular picture I want.
 Q. You may be wanting it when the film is otherwise busy. As an independent exhibitor you are not suffering in getting what you want. Your programme you are able to keep and arrange for it regularly?
 A. Yes.
 Q. There is another independent exhibitor in Nagpur?
 A. Yes, he has just started.
 Q. To your knowledge he does not experience any difficulty in getting what he wants?
 A. No. Whatever pictures I am getting he cannot get.
 Q. Between you probably you have a better pull as you command three theatres.
 A. As an older man in the field I am in a better position.
 Q. You know the tricks of the trade.
 A. There is no question of any trick. It is all a business relation.
 Q. You may be said to be the Madans of Nagpur?
 A. I do not aspire to be so.
 Q. I notice from your statement that you refer to some one concern which is trying to have a monopoly and all that. I suppose you refer to Madans there?
 A. Well, I do.
 Q. It does not do any harm?
 A. No; that is what I have stated in my statement.
 Q. He is a mightier and bigger brother in the trade as you would put it?
 A. It is not exactly like that. Whoever wants to keep connection with them suffers in the end. The Craddock Cinema also suffered and now they are getting their supplies independently and they are better off now than they were when they were with Madans. Madans' policy is "kill and live," others', "live and let live."
 Q. You have succeeded in driving him out of Nagpur?
 A. No, Sir, they are a bigger firm.
 Q. Is there any such thing as "block booking" or "blind booking" in this country as regards the Western films?
 A. Not to my knowledge.
 Q. You are getting your trade journals yourself.
 A. Yes. As far as possible I select what is likely to attract from the trade reviews. I also generally follow the criticisms in the Indian press.
 Q. So that the exhibitor knows what he is going to exhibit although he may not have seen it?
 A. To a certain extent he knows.
 Q. It is stated that Madans always prefer block booking?
 A. Rather they insist on that. But I should like to keep aloof from them. They charge different rates for different pictures.
 Q. I suppose you cannot have the best from one man unless you pay for it.

A. It all depends upon the supply and demand. One importer will give the same picture for a less amount. But Madans make their constituents pay the price that they fix.

Q. I suppose you do not suffer and you get your supply in sufficiently large quantities that you want?

A. Yes. In the capital city the exhibitor does not suffer at all. I do not suffer as the Jubbulpore people.

Q. As regards Indian pictures, I suppose you are better off here. In some places they have to pay 60 per cent. to the producer?

A. I do not know.

Q. For foreign pictures how much have you to pay?

A. Almost the same percentage, 40 to 50 per cent., especially with Pathé, for Harold Lloyd pictures.

Q. Is he also trying to become a Madan?

A. I do not think so, I think it costs him so much.

Q. Have you heard of any general complaint about the moral tone of the Western films shown?

A. Not to my knowledge.

Q. You have not heard any complaint from the people here?

A. Not from the audience. On one occasion there was a complaint. About yesterday's picture ("Answer of the Sea") there was a lot of complaint made to me. Of course, opinion varies on that very much.

Q. Now before that, had you any complaint from any section of the public, lady or gentleman, about the nature of the pictures you were showing?

A. No.

Q. Do you get posters here?

A. We do.

Q. Were there any complaints about the posters which you were showing?

A. No complaint has reached me at any rate.

Q. Had you anything to do with censorship at any time? Had you to take any pictures before the Board?

A. Three years back I had 2 pictures and I had them passed, through a business friend in Bombay. My senior partner bought them in Germany and they were imported into Bombay.

Q. What about educational films? Supposing you were compelled to include a certain length in your programme, would you be prepared to show them?

A. It all depends upon how they are prepared. If they have a commercial value I will show them. It all depends upon how they are prepared.

Q. How do you like the quota system. Supposing you were compelled to show a certain number of Indian films every week, would you be prepared to do it?

A. There are certain houses, Sir, where we cannot show any Indian films at all. For instance, the New Strand at Jubbulpore cannot show any Indian films at all as it is in a cantonment area. It is purely intended for European audience. A percentage would be decidedly a handicap.

Q. Here the custom demands it and so you show it?

A. Yes.

Q. Had you at any time any idea of producing films yourself.

A. No. I cannot do so. My senior partner is already connected in Nasik with the Hindustan Film Co.

Q. These films also you show here?

A. Yes.

Q. Have you shown here any Indian pictures produced in Bengal?

A. I showed one of them here.

Q. How did it take with the public?

A. It failed.

Q. What was the reason?

A. The people did not like it.

Q. What was the story about?

A. "The Soul of the Slave."

Q. Was it a drama or what?

A. I believe it was a mythological picture.

Q. Is it based on anything philosophical or what?

A. I do not remember the details exactly.

Q. By whom was it produced?

A. Mr. Bhaduri was the producer. He was also one of the Directors and Mr. Gupta was another.

Q. It failed to attract the audience?

A. Absolutely.

Q. Was it because the mode of dress was different?

A. The mode of dress was different and this Indian picture with English acting did not appeal.

Q. The actors there were foreigners?

A. Yes, but the Indian audience do not like an Indian picture with Western acting and all that. They may appreciate it in a Western film but in Indian pictures they do not appreciate it.

Q. Where was it produced?

A. It was produced, I believe, in Bengal.

Q. Depicting modern social life?

A. It was a mythological picture. It was four years back.

Q. Since then you have not shown any Bengalee picture?

A. No.

Q. Had you any trouble at any time over any film on communal grounds? Any community objecting to any particular film?

A. Generally we do not put up such pictures. We had no such cases till now.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: Have you seen "Razia Begum"?

A. I did not show it at all.

Q. Have you heard of any trouble elsewhere?

A. I have.

Q. What was the cause?

A. Since it was banned I did not care to enquire.

Q. You say the Censor Board is over-strict, and in answer to No. 21 you say the Board are much influenced. Are they influenced by rival companies?

A. Yes, they make propaganda work in the papers and people are naturally susceptible to newspaper influence. The Censor Boards also are influenced by that.

Q. Do such things take place here?

A. The public believe that over the question of "The Triumph of the Rat" it was so.

Chairman: Have you seen the whole play?

A. No. In the 'Statesman' there was a lot of correspondence going on on that subject.

Q. Have you any studio in Kolhapur?

A. I have no studio there.

Q. That over-strict Censor Board passed this "Answer of the Sea" also which you showed yesterday?

A. Yes.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: Who inspects your cinema theatres? Do the Police come at times to find out whether any uncertified film has been shown?

A. We send a report every week to the Deputy Commissioner.

Q. He is satisfied with that report?

A. If he is satisfied with our report he does not come to see the film. But if he is dissatisfied he sends a letter stating that such and such film is banned for this province and should not be shown.

Q. He does not care to see whether any uncertified film is shown?

A. He does not see it and he has no means of seeing it. Sometimes he comes to see the pictures but with what idea he comes, I cannot say.

Q. Are pirated or stolen copies of films sold here? Have you seen any?

A. Not to my knowledge and I have not seen any.

Q. You are in favour of the entertainment tax?

A. Yes, provided it is utilised for the encouragement of the industry.

Q. This comes, not from your pocket, but from the pocket of the public?

A. Yes, Sir, but the exhibitor suffers.

Q. In what way?

A. The income of the exhibitor would drop. But I have no objection to the tax provided it is used for the betterment of pictures.

Q. You are not a producer?

A. No.

Q. You get raw films?

A. No. I am not a producer.

Q. You say Hindustani is written only in Devnagri? Is it not written in Urdu characters also?

A. Yes.

Q. Would you have any objection to its being written in both characters?

A. I do not much mind.

Q. It should be the common language for the whole of India?

A. That would be a better thing.

Q. The difficulty of language will be solved all over India?

A. But not immediately; especially in the South people do not understand Hindi at all. They understand English better.

Mr. Green: Do you own your cinema houses?

A. Yes; I own two, the Buldi and the City Theatre.

Q. There is nothing to prevent other firms trying to offer higher rent for your houses?

A. Nothing.

Q. Nobody can evict you unless they pay higher rent?

A. I have taken the land on long lease.

Q. So nobody can turn you out?

A. But they can, when the land lease is finished.

Q. It is a long way off?

A. Yes.

Q. As regards the supply of films I understand you to say that you are not under any obligation to any particular company?

A. No.

Q. You are not bound down to take whatever pictures are offered to you?

A. I have contracts with different companies and the selection is left with me.

Q. You want for your Buldi 104 programmes a year. You do not get your pictures from one firm. You divide it among three or four importers and you contract for a certain number of films from each? If you want a particular film you have to pay more for it?

A. There are different rates for "Special," "Jewel," and like that, and I take what I want.

Q. And they do not force the films on you?

A. Very seldom they do that.

Q. I take it you get from Universal, Globe, Pathe?

A. Yes.

Q. From Madans?

A. No. There are other importers in Karachi and there is the Empire in Bombay also.

Q. As regards Indian films, where do you get them from?

A. I get them from Bombay.

Q. Have you to enter into contracts?

A. I generally take from four companies and they give me the first refusal, and if I do not take a particular picture then they offer it to others.

Q. You have some business arrangement with them to take some pictures?

A. Yes.

Q. There again they try to force the pictures on you?

A. No, they do not do that.

Q. I suppose you have shown "The Flag Lieutenant"?

A. No, I will show it later on.

Q. You do not consider English films superior to others and on that ground you are opposed to preference to them?

A. I am opposed to any such suggestion. But I have no objection to get them on a percentage basis.

Q. It is purely a question of business with you?

A. Yes.

Q. If they would give you additional return you would go in for them?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you think any preferential treatment should be given to British pictures in the customs?

A. I think customs should be the same for all.

Q. Supposing it is possible to enter into a business arrangement with English exhibitors or, if you like, with the English Government that for every British picture shown in India or for every 1,000 feet of British film shown in India so many feet of Indian pictures will be exhibited in England or other parts of the Empire. Do you think there is any prospect in this as a business arrangement?

A. I am sure the Indian pictures would not be liked by the Britishers and they would not get the same return.

Q. Are there any defects in the technique?

A. They are mythological and would not appeal to the advanced west.

Q. Do European audiences visit your Indian shows?

A. I get absolutely no European audience at all for Indian pictures.

Q. Don't you try to get them, don't you advertise?

A. Yes, I do, but I don't get any European audience at all for Indian pictures.

Q. Do you consider that "The Rat" and "The Triumph of the Rat" are well up in technique?

A. Yes, they are very good pictures.

Q. As good as the ordinary American ones, I suppose?

A. Yes.

Q. I see you have got some suspicion that Indian productions may not get the same chance and encouragement in the other parts of the Empire. Supposing England gave an earnest of her willingness to take Indian pictures by giving them concessions, will that do?

A. If we could get the same return on the Indian films, then I will alter my mind.

Q. You think there will be obstacles?

A. Even if Britain were to give encouragement by official measures, I fear the ordinary Englishman would attend only one or two Indian pictures, then he would stop going to them.

Q. Are you aware that Indian films have to pay only $\frac{1}{3}$ of the duty that foreign films pay, if Indian films are imported to England?

A. I think it was about the year 1920 that the film "Sri Krishna Janma" was sent out to England and it was an absolute failure.

Q. Was the technique good in that picture?

A. It was the most popular of all Indian pictures.

Q. Possibly it was at the beginning of Indian productions?

A. Yes, in the early stages.

Chairman: When did the film industry begin in India, do you know?

A. In 1916 or 1917.

Q. You know that the film "Sri Krishna Janma" was run for 5 weeks at Madras?

Mr. Green: You think the technique in that picture was quite as good as in the Western pictures?

A. Yes, no doubt, it was an early production.

Q. I am very much interested in what you say about censorship. You are of the impression that occasionally the censorship is done in an over-strict manner. You, however, don't give any actual instances of your business having been interfered with?

A. I don't refer to my personal business, but that is my general remark applicable to some of the pictures that were banned.

Q. Are you aware of the canons of censorship adopted in Bombay and almost substantially by other censorship boards in India? You know there is a list wherein they give details about films that are likely to be objectionable, such as nude figures, bathing scenes, etc., which pass the limits of propriety?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you think that the film which you exhibited last night, "Answer of the Sea", exhibited nude pictures?

A. One or two scenes, yes.

Q. If you were interested in a boy, or say, an adolescent boy or girl between the ages of 12 and 20, would you allow him or her to see such a picture as was shown yesterday?

Chairman: I was told, Mr. Green, by a member of your service that he would have no objection to take his daughter or son to such a film. He has already given his answers definitely that he would not allow them to see such pictures.....

Mr. Green: I don't agree with him. As regards an Indian boy, would you take a boy between the ages of 16 and 20 to such a film?

A. Yes, I would not object to that.

Q. You don't think it will have any harmful effect on him?

A. I would not take a child between the ages of 3 and 10 to such pictures.

Q. I should have thought that children of that age would not have an

effective impression left in their minds. I have always been told that complete exposure in India is regarded as highly improper. Do you agree?

A. Well, there is difference of opinion about it.

Q. You say I am not right in my statement?

A. I cannot say whether you are right or not.

Q. You should know more than I?

A. Some people do believe it is improper but others don't.

Chairman: Ordinarily women don't expose themselves; even though they bathe in public tanks, etc., they cover themselves up, do they not?

A. Yes, certainly they do. They don't expose themselves, at all.

Mr. Green: No one could object to that as their bathing is extremely modest. Don't you think that the exhibition of such scenes will affect the minds of the adolescents?

A. But when one is used to such pictures, it is all right.

Chairman: But luckily we have not got many such pictures?

A. Not at all.

Mr. Green: If this particular film has been passed by the censors unnoticed, then it may be an exception, I suppose?

A. Yes.

Q. Are you entitled to say that films are being very rigorously censored in India?

A. Generally films are rigorously censored, but the picture which you saw yesterday may be an exception.

Chairman: It has escaped the evil eye of the Bombay Board of Film Censors, I suppose?

A. Yes.

Mr. Green: About the constitution of the Central Board. What is your idea exactly? Is it to have stipendiary officers to do the actual work of inspection of films and refer the matter to the Central Board?

A. Yes, these stipendiary inspectors should view every film and, if they have any doubt in the matter, then they could place the matter before the Board for their decision.

Q. I see you suggest that in the Board itself there should be three people interested in the industry, representing the exhibitors, the importers and the producers. Is there not a danger that these gentlemen may sometimes be unjust? It might be that others might hold the opinion that some of them have been partial to themselves, or unfair to their rivals. Don't you think they will be placed in an awkward position sometimes?

A. I don't quite appreciate the suggestion.

Q. I take it that this is only your general idea and that you have not bestowed much of your attention and thought over the question?

A. No, I have not given much thought to it.

Written Statement of Mr. C. B. PAREKH, President of the Civil Station Sub-Committee, Nagpur, dated the 4th February 1928.

INTRODUCTORY.

1. No.

GENERAL.

2. (a) My experience is only about Nagpur and that too within the last 8 or 9 years. The majority of the audience depends upon the place where the theatre is. The educated classes and the students constitute the bulk of those who patronize the cinemas. The illiterate and the poor classes

patronise them to a much smaller extent. The attendance from general observance is slightly on the increase.

(b) The above covers it.

(c) It is difficult to observe the attendance of children. To my mind it is very small.

PART I.

3. Indian films depicting historical life and mythology are the most popular. Next comes films of comic nature and then comes the usual dramatic films.

4. Where there is competition the audiences are adequately and even handsomely treated but without that, and as long as audiences are available, the tendency is to show common pictures.

5. I am not aware.

5. (a) As Indian films they are of good quality but inferior to European or American films. They are steadily improving in their nature and quality.

(b) Yes, they are very popular.

(c) I am unable to answer.

6. (a) Yes, such films are and would for some time be more popular with Indian audiences than the Western films but surfeit is bound to come.

(b) Historical and mythological films are preferred both by the educated and illiterate people.

7—11. I have no knowledge.

12. In a place like Nagpur an amusement tax is bound to handicap both the exhibitor and the audiences, particularly the poorer one. That is the reason why the Municipality has not made up its mind to introduce this tax.

13—14. I am unable to answer.

15. I believe, yes, because of the popularity of the Indian films.

16. I cannot answer from any personal knowledge, but so far the directors, actors, actresses and scenario-writers, though they have improved very much during the past few years, are certainly inferior to those that are connected with the European and American films.

I am unable to suggest measures which will supply this deficiency except wait and let time do its work.

17. I cannot answer.

18. The only action which I think that Government can take is to encourage private enterprise and to subsidize it.

19. I cannot answer.

20. I am not in favour for subsidizing the film industry. If it has the disadvantage of being behind the European and American industry in the supply of actors and technical staff, it has the advantage of producing films depicting Indian life and history which appeal the most. Subsidy may take away the enterprise which is essential for the growth of film industry.

21. I am not an industrialist but hold the opinion that a state is not a proper agent for the management of an industry and more particularly the film industry.

Films of British Commonwealth.

22. India as a member of the British Empire must participate in any policy intended to give encouragement to the British Empire films but this will not (a) assist India in the development of her own film industry or (b) assist her in making herself better known and understood or (c) improve the standard of Western films shown in India.

23. (a) Pictures would afford a very good medium for communicating the activities of the different members of the Empire to one another. There are many points in each Government of the Empire, and particularly in respect

of social or industrial activities, which other Governments may very profitably learn.

(b) This could be easily done, if each Government issues, or subsidises the issue of, pictures on the lines of topical gazette for being exhibited within its own limit or in the limits of other Governments. Such pictures can easily be exchanged between different Governments of the Empire.

PART II.

Social Aspects and Control.

24. (a) I have seen very few such films.

(b) No.

(c) Films described in question 24 (b) are bound to be harmful to all classes particularly the youthful class as such films bring men and women in contact with the evils of life which they might not have hitherto known.

(d) I think the censorship is adequate.

(e) I do not know.

25. The standard of censorship in the West and East is bound to be different but I think the present censorship is adequate.

26. (a), (b) I have not seen a film offending religious susceptibility.

27. (a) The uneducated classes do not understand the forms of western life and may even misunderstand some aspects of western life, but amongst the educated Indian there is no misunderstanding; on the other hand I believe the educated Indian has come to understand more of the European life throughout the pictures than by contact with Europeans in India.

(b) No.

28. (a) No dramatic film should be shown to children who are likely to carry a bad impression of anything done.

(b) With adolescents it is very different, as they have more sense to discriminate between good and evil.

29. I do not think it will be practicable to have films for youths only, or for cinema managers to exclude youths from other films.

30. Children under 12 should not be shown any films except historical or topical or comical.

31—32. Yes.

33. (a) May.

(b) Not likely.

(c) Yes.

34. I am unable to answer.

35. (a) I consider that the present Provincial Board is satisfactory because the censorship is good and bad pictures are not allowed to be exhibited.

(b) A whole-time officer is therefore not necessary.

36. (a) I have no knowledge.

(b) It will be difficult to obtain sufficient number of non-officials whose opinion is worth having to sit on the Board and examine all pictures. Nevertheless, some will examine and their opinions are bound to be useful.

37. (a), (b) I think safeguards are necessary to exhibit a film for there might be a local objection though I must concede such an occasion has not arisen in Nagpur.

38—40. No.

41. Not noticeable.

42. No.

43. I am unable to answer.

44. By praising good films and criticising bad ones.

45. (a) It is in the interest of the industry that film production should be controlled to some measure by Government in order to make sure that the film produced will not be objectionable or rejected after producing it. This would save a company from incurring expenditure in producing a film which may not be allowed to be exhibited.

(b) Film producing companies may be registered and licensed but there appears to be no necessity for periodical inspection of their studios.

***Oral Evidence of Mr. C. B. PAREKH, President of the Civil Station Sub-Committee, Nagpur, on Tuesday, the 7th February 1928.**

Chairman: You are connected with the Municipality here, I suppose?

A. Yes, I am the President of the Civil Station Sub-Committee here.

Q. Do you go to the cinema very often?

A. Yes, very often.

Q. How many years have you been in Nagpur?

A. Ever since I was 4 years old.

Q. Have you ever been to England?

A. No.

Q. So you had the whole of your education, even in law at Nagpur itself?

A. Yes.

Q. Can you tell us whether the cinema is having a good effect on the people of this country?

A. Yes, sometimes, it does. It supplies amusement.

Q. And is it productive of any good at all?

A. Yes, sometimes, especially the topical pictures which are really interesting.

Q. And I suppose through the cinemas you get knowledge of life in the outside world?

A. Yes.

Q. Through the cinema you also see the conditions of their life, their habits and customs, thereby one has an idea of the whole thing?

A. Yes. More than anything else the physical development of man and woman is vividly expressed through the screen.

Q. And therefore the cinema is productive of some good?

A. Yes, certainly.

Q. Has it any tendency to produce evil?

A. No, not to my knowledge.

Q. You see both Western and Indian films?

A. Yes, I do, but mostly I see Western films.

Q. I suppose you have seen films here and in Bombay?

A. Yes, I have seen films here and in Bombay, Bangalore and other places.

Q. It has been stated to us in almost every province we have visited, that adolescents are likely to be demoralised by seeing some of the special feature films of Western social dramas depicting the underworld life. What is your opinion in regard to that matter?

A. I don't think so.

Q. Is that fear based on seeing too much of the exhibition of passion on the screen?

A. It all depends upon the particular manner and the aspect in which those pictures are viewed.

Q. Many of the things seen on the screen are foreign to this country and in that way it is stated that they are likely to affect the morals of our young people?

A. You mean the growing man.

Q. Yes, the adolescent between the ages of 15 and 20 the man who is just attaining his puberty.

A. I don't think so. I have known several College students who see these cinema shows and have had discussions with them. I find their way of thinking does not in any way differ from mine at all.

Q. And I suppose they cease to think of these pictures once they have seen them. Is that what you mean?

A. Yes.

Q. Another thing which is suggested in that some of the drinking scenes, scenes depicting the cabaret life, etc., shown in the Western pictures will leave the impression on the minds of Indian youths that they represent the real life of the West?

A. Such pictures are very rare. And I believe it is almost impossible for a man to believe that they represent the normal life of the West. At any rate the educated classes will carry away no such impression.

Q. And do you think the illiterate classes are likely to form such an opinion?

A. Such pictures are very few and the vast bulk of the illiterate classes only go in for the Indian pictures.

Q. Do you mean that they don't understand the Western films and are unable to follow them?

A. Yes, that is my impression.

Q. So, your opinion is that the average Indian does not form such an opinion of the West from seeing these pictures?

A. No, on the other hand I think these films are a medium for India to understand Europe better.

Q. But there are many things which represent normal life also?

A. There are also evils in Western life which are not normal.

Q. But do you think that there should be a little more care taken in censoring some of these Western pictures?

A. My general impression is that the present censorship is adequate. Possibly there may be one or two scenes here and there in some stray cases which could have been cut out. In not more than, at the most, half a dozen cases have I found anything objectionable at all.

Q. You have not seen any film which you would have liked to see banned altogether. I suppose?

A. No.

Q. Well, I noticed you attended the film last night with your wife?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you think there is any harm caused by such films being shown?

A. I would not cater such films to young people.

Q. Adolescents between the ages of 14 and 20?

A. It is certainly not good for them at all. I may not have objected to a stray exposure of a nude picture but in this case it was a sustained one. It is bound to have a deleterious effect on the youth.

Q. They had to show the living aspect of fairies, and real live women had to take their parts?

A. Yes.

Q. That is the only objectionable picture which you have seen till now?

A. Yes, that is the only one. Though it is a very harmless film in itself I think it will have a very deleterious effect on the minds of young people.

Q. What did you understand from the cries which the audience made from below when they saw the nude pictures?

A. They were amused, that is all.

Q. I thought they were rather gloating over that sight?

A. I don't think so. It was only an amusement to them.

Q. I thought it was so, as the cry went up when the girl exposed herself completely?

A. The noise was made by the boys. I personally think, that it is not a good picture for boys and girls.

Q. Now, you would not care to take a young brother or a young sister of yours to such a picture?

A. I would not, certainly. I won't care to go myself.

Q. What do the ladies think of that picture?

A. They don't like these pictures at all. The cry against these pictures is from the ladies themselves.

Mr. Green: Do you mean ladies of all communities?

A. I won't say European ladies, but certainly Indian ladies.

Chairman: I suppose generally speaking you are satisfied with the moral tone of the pictures and that the censorship is adequate?

A. I have nothing to grouse about as regards the moral tone of the pictures nor am I dissatisfied about the censorship as it obtains now.

Q. What do you think Government should do to encourage the Indian film industry?

A. I don't know how it could be encouraged. I have not thought over the question.

Q. You have not come in contact with the producers?

A. No.

Q. And you know the general technique is poor?

A. Yes.

Q. Would you advocate scholarships for sending our young men who are in the line to study improved methods of production, technique, etc.?

A. There is no harm in doing so.

Q. Do you think Government should do it?

A. Yes, certainly.

Q. There are so many other industries which need help. It might be said "why should this particular industry alone should be specially taken care of"?

A. Government gives scholarships to other industries as well and the film industry is certainly a very promising industry which has a bright future before it in this country. For example, the Hindu mythology and Indian history is wide enough to produce good pictures.

Oral Evidence of Mr. Y. S. YENKATARAMAN, Editor of the "Hitavada," Nagpur, on Tuesday, the 7th February 1928.

Chairman: You are a native of Madras settled at Nagpur?

A. Yes.

Q. How long have you been in Nagpur?

A. For about 6 years now.

Q. You are the Editor of the "Hitavada" here?

A. Yes.

Q. You go to the cinema often?

A. Yes, sometimes.

Q. You see both Western and Indian pictures?

A. Yes, I do.

Q. And do the Indian pictures appeal to you as a Madrassee?

A. Yes. They are quite alright.

Q. Do you think there is any provincial peculiarity in these Indian pictures, the picture from one province being not quite popular in the other province?

A. There is only the language difficulty and, if that is solved, there won't be any trouble, I think.

Q. If the titles are translated in the various vernaculars there won't be any trouble you say?

A. Yes, that is what I mean.

Q. Do the Madrassee women appreciate the dress and other things?

A. They do so far as regards Indian pictures.

Q. What is the effect of the cinema on public conduct? What is your opinion?

A. The constant seeing of undesirable pictures has some deleterious effect on the young and impressionable minds. By constantly seeing such pictures, such classes of people are likely to carry away a wrong impression that whatever they see in the pictures accurately represents real life with the result that some of them are likely to be tempted to imitate them. Of course, the educated classes won't be affected by such things.

Q. You think they are apt to think that what they see in the film is correct and would try to put that into practice?

A. That is my fear, especially scenes like pick-pocketing, etc., seen in some of the pictures. Though I have no idea whether it has increased crime in this province, yet that is my fear, that the crime aspect is likely to appeal to a section of the audience.

Q. And what have you got to say about the sex aspect?

A. Different sections of the audience receive different impressions. I think some of the extreme pictures of the West showing sex relations do not create a good impression on Indian minds.

Q. Do you see such pictures very commonly?

A. They are not very common in Nagpur.

Q. Have you come across many Western pictures like that?

A. No.

Q. Do you think that the censorship is adequate or should it be a little more strict?

A. I should think, so far as the serials are concerned, censorship is not adequate. This I say because of the exaggerations and perversions which we see in these serials. In social dramas and other feature films, we don't see much exaggeration.

Q. I suppose, in the serials you see more fighting, torture, etc.?

A. Yes.

Q. You think that is not altogether good?

A. I think so.

Q. We are told they are getting less and less popular.

A. Yes. They are popular only with some sections.

Q. As regards the other films dealing with sex problems what do you think about them?

A. I think that in those cases the censorship is more or less adequate.

Q. Do you think that any slow poison is being introduced in the mind of the Indian public, creating a feeling of disregard for the Westerner by what they see on the screen?

A. There is no doubt that a section of the public, especially the less educated, are likely to carry away the impression that what they see on the screen represents the daily or the normal life of the Westerner there. That is my impression.

Q. What is the remedy for that?

A. Undesirable Western films should be censored properly at the source itself. I think the remedy lies with the Westerner himself. The Western producer is interested in maintaining his reputation and if he allows such films, I do not see that much could be done here by censorship.

Q. You say that censorship is not the method of checking it?

A. When the Westerner deliberately allows such an impression to get abroad by producing such films what can we do? He must take care of his reputation. At any rate he is equally interested in maintaining his reputation.

Q. On that ground you don't think the Government of India should interfere or the Censorship Board should adopt any method of censoring in order to deal with that aspect?

A. No.

Q. Unless it has a demoralising effect on the people of the country the censorship board should not interfere?

A. Yes. That is my opinion.

Q. But you yourself recognise that it might have a demoralising effect on the people.

A. I said that there would be a misrepresentation of western life. The westerners are equally, if not more, interested in avoiding misrepresentation of their life and civilisation. They can do so by not producing undesirable pictures.

Q. Supposing a youth of impressionable age sees a drinking scene; is it not likely that he would also follow them and fall into evil habits?

A. The impressionable youths are to some extent affected by constantly seeing undesirable films.

Q. Is it not a sufficient reason for us to take note of those films? Apart from the misrepresentation the youths of the country are likely to be affected by certain evils. Is it not our duty to take note of it?

A. Without tightening the censorship unduly—I mean to say without interfering with the entertainment aspect of cinema pictures, we can do something.

Q. On the whole you are of opinion that a stricter censorship is needed?

A. Not very much stricter. Stricter censorship is needed only in the case of crime films where serious crimes are depicted, as for example, how to stop a motor car and how to steal it, etc.

Q. Do you really think that people learn these things from the cinema? Does not the march of time, the association with other countries and the spread of magazines which improve knowledge, help in these things? Will not time mend them?

A. It is the educated people that understand these things. The masses yet do not.

Q. How are we to depict the life of a character without showing it. Supposing you show the life of a crook on the film you have to show the crook's methods also. Similarly if you want to depict a drunkard's life, you have to show him as a drunkard. Is it not so?

A. My point is that these serials contain nothing but such things. If these things come in occasionally I wouldn't mind. But as a general rule these serials contain undesirable features! As the only object of the producer is to get much more money he wants to add more reels. He wants to make more money by lengthening the picture. So all sorts of undesirable features are introduced.

Q. Elsewhere, in America, the recent tendency is to cut short the length of films. The Producers' organisation is of this opinion.

A. I am not aware of this. I think that short stories are much better than these serials.

Q. What is your view, as a publicist, as to this question of participating in the Imperial Conference's Resolution about preference for British Empire films?

A. The idea is good, provided we can enter into some sort of reciprocal arrangement which would benefit India also. If, as the Imperial Conference suggests, India were to take 20 per cent. of Empire films as a minimum quota, Britain or any Dominion also should accept the same quota of Indian pictures. In that case it will promote mutual understanding.

Q. How are we to make the public consent to it? So far as India is concerned they have been educated to a taste for western pictures, India is ready to see western pictures. But England is not ready to receive Indian pictures at all. There is no taste.

A. As a result of this committee's work and the trouble they take, if a better class of Indian pictures is produced, India will have a chance of getting these pictures accepted in Britain. Britain should be asked to show the same quota of Indian pictures which India will accept from Britain. If this arrangement could be agreed upon it would promote some sort of better mutual understanding.

Q. You mean to say legal compulsion on British theatres to show a proportion of Indian pictures?

A. Yes. There is now the complaint here also that British pictures are not equal in quality to the American pictures. The theatre proprietors make this complaint. When India waives this objection, I hope the Britishers also can do so. It is on this basis that I would agree to this quota system. I am for a reciprocal arrangement and not for granting Imperial preference. This may be arranged not only with Britain but with every component part of the Empire. Educational films also can be exchanged like this.

Q. What do you think Government should do to encourage the Indian film industry?

A. First of all Government should arrange to give a sort of development loans to companies of good standing with adequate safeguards.

Q. Do you advocate the giving of scholarships for training?

A. I don't know whether there will be many people coming forward to accept scholarships. I will leave this matter to the companies themselves. If first-class companies are started people may come forward. Topical Indian News, like the Pathé Gazette, should be shown in every theatre in India and Government should encourage any company which is willing to produce such films.

Q. What else do you suggest?

A. Such Indian news films will be of educative value. At present we know more about what is going on in London and New York than in our own country. We want films on the lines of the Pathé Gazette. If any company undertakes to produce such films, Government should help it.

Q. It has been suggested that Government should establish their own studio for producing educational films. I use the word educational in the broad sense of the word—public propaganda. What is your view about it?

A. I am opposed to Government monopoly.

Q. It is not a question of monopoly. Just to produce films on agriculture, public health, hygiene, etc.?

A. Suggestions in regard to these should be conveyed in the form of stories. If they show merely the implements, etc., they will not be popular. They must be presented in story form. I doubt whether Government's efforts in this direction would be appreciated by the people.

Q. To whom you would entrust the production of such films?

A. I think each province should be left to manage itself, because agriculture, industry, public health are all provincial subjects now. There may be a central body to advise but the initiative must be forthcoming from the provinces themselves. Because such educative films must appeal to the people of the provinces concerned.

Q. As regards the constitution of the Boards of Censors you know the present system is the Commissioner of Police is the *ex-officio* President and the others are nominated by Government. Do you think that such a state of things should continue?

A. I don't see why the Commissioner of Police should be the *ex-officio* President. The Commissioner may be a member.

Mr. Green: You have suggested, I think, that an Indian News Gazette be made compulsory. Do I understand you to say that if Government cannot get a company to do it, they will be justified in doing it themselves? Scenes would have to be taken in different parts of India. Then the whole thing has to be edited to form a gazette, which will obviously have to be done somewhere. Do you think it will be worthwhile for Government to say they will give so much for negatives of films which are suitable for the gazette, and to nominate some official to edit it?

A. I think Government can do that; but there is the risk of the Government agency being misunderstood.

Q. Therefore you prefer a commercial body?

A. Yes. I prefer a commercial body and I prefer Government to help. I would ask the commercial body to take the assistance of Government because Government's action is likely to be misunderstood.

Q. Do you contemplate any difficulty in getting these gazettes shown?

A. I do not contemplate any difficulty. I think they will be most popular. Pathé Gazette is very popular.

Q. With what class are the films of the Pathé Gazette popular? We have different evidence on that point.

A. Because it is always associated with English pictures we get only the educated class to see it. The masses do not understand English and so they don't generally see the Gazette. But whenever, occasionally any reel is shown, say, connected with the Congress activities or any Indian event, there is a great rush on the cinema houses. I can say that from my experience. The popularity of the news reel depends upon the nature of the subjects chosen.

Written Statement of Mr. S. M. HASAN, Guardian to Raja Azam Shah, Nagpur.

GENERAL.

2. (a) The attendance very largely depends on the kind of film exhibited. For certain films the proportion of educated classes is much greater than that of illiterate classes and *vice versa*. Generally speaking however, the attendance of the illiterate classes is distinctly on the increase, while the attendance of the educated classes is more or less steady. I am afraid it is not possible for me to support this reply even roughly with statistics. This reply refers to Nagpur.

(b) An average cinema audience in the particular locality I am familiar with is composed of a large number of what one calls the "lower middle classes", a fair number of "middle class people", some students, sprinkling of British soldiers, some members of the independent professions, and a small proportion of persons in the "higher walks of life".

(c) About 15 per cent.

PART I.

3. The classes of films most popular with an Indian audience are adventure and comic films of life in the West, not to speak of films depicting purely Indian themes. I have known films depicting certain episodes from the life of Shivaji draw packed houses night after night.

6. (a) Yes, with the larger portion of the average cinema audience in an Indian town or city.

(b) (1) Scenes from history and topical Indian news.

(2) Scenes from Indian mythology and national literature and also those scenes from history which are of common knowledge.

PART II.

24. (a) Not to my knowledge.

(b) None so far as I know.

(c) Films having a sex or crime interest are distinctly harmful to those who are yet of an impressionable age by reason of the strong power of suggestion inherent more or less in every film.

(d) Yes, although it might be stricter.

25. I do not think so.

26. (a) Under existing conditions very great care is called for.

27. (a) The films in question certainly lower Western civilization in the eyes of Indians, though they may not misrepresent it. Such films are generally unintelligible to an uneducated Indian and are likely to be misunderstood by him. No appreciable undesirable results in my opinion can follow from this.

29. Yes.

30. Yes, because many scenes especially in western films are likely to have an adverse effect upon them as a result of lack of experience and a proper perspective. All children below 12.

31. (a) Yes.

32. Yes.

33. (a) Barring children and adolescents, it would interfere unreasonably.

(b) No.

Oral Evidence of Mr. S. M. HASAN, Guardian to Raja Azam Shah, Nagpur, on Tuesday, the 7th February 1928.

Chairman: You are interested in the Cinema?

A. Yes. As a visitor.

Q. Do you visit the cinemas in Nagpur?

A. Yes. Nearly every day.

Q. Do you like the cinemas?

A. Yes.

Q. Both Western and Indian?

A. Yes. Both of them.

Q. Which appeals to you more?

A. I like the adventure and the comic pictures of the West. Also Indian films that depict scenes of Indian national history, mythology, etc., appeal to me.

Q. When you say adventure films of the West I suppose you mean the films that are shown over here? That is to say, films like Douglas Fairbanks, etc. Or do you mean the Wild West adventures?

A. Pictures like Douglas Fairbanks, etc., shown in the Buldi Picture House.

Q. Do they show many of these Wild West pictures here where cowboys, etc., appear?

A. Yes.

Q. And you like them?

A. Yes. I do.

Q. What about the social dramas, or what are called feature films? I mean to say social stories?

A. The question whether it is liked or not depends upon the class of the people that go to see them. Educated classes could easily understand them while the illiterate class may or may not understand.

Q. They don't go to those dramas?

A. They do go. But probably from the point of view of appreciation they may or may not like them.

Q. But they like these wild adventures?

A. Yes. They do.

Q. Do they like the Indian films very much?

A. Yes. I have seen houses packed to the full when they depict certain things from the life of Shivaji. They managed it very well.

Q. Are Indian films getting more and more popular?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you know whether they are able to get the Indian films easily?

A. I am not in a position to answer that question. I am not directly connected with the industry.

Q. Have you noticed whether there is any difficulty in getting them? Were there any changes of programmes or something of that sort as a result of films not being available?

A. To my knowledge there is no difficulty.

Q. Do you generally read about the pictures before you go to them?

A. Never. I simply go and sit down there and see it through.

Q. So that you see good as well as bad?

A. Yes.

Q. What is your opinion with regard to the effect of the cinema on the people?

A. In my opinion, from the point of view of persons of impressionable age who go there, it is not very good. These films are distinctly harmful to them.

Q. What do you mean exactly by "impressionable age"?

A. People whose ideas are not fully developed. Of course, I mean young boys of tender age. It is likely to have a certain amount of harmful effect on them.

Q. You think the films which are ordinarily shown in Nagpur may have an effect upon certain classes of people?

A. I mean these sex films.

Q. You mean to say that young people who are likely to be easily led astray are likely to be affected by these films?

A. Yes. They are harmful to those who are still of a very impressionable age.

Q. It is not obscene or vulgar or objectionable?

A. Not at all.

Q. It is a thing which can be shown with propriety?

A. Yes.

Q. Yet you are apprehensive that it might have some effect upon the youth of impressionable age?

A. Yes.

Q. You mean to say that by seeing this they come to know things which they should not know?

A. Yes.

Q. You are a believer in keeping things secret till they themselves come to know of it.

A. Here in India, unlike in Europe and other Western countries where the customs are quite different, these young boys of impressionable age not being brought up in that way, are apt to run away with certain ideas.

Q. How does it injure them? Supposing they see an actual thing. I mean to say not on the film. You would have the same objection?

A. Yes.

Q. Your objection will hold good in the case of anything which is not done in India generally? That is to say have you got any dancing or anything of that sort in Nagpur?

A. Yes. There is dancing. There are such demonstrations.

Q. Do many people go to these dancing halls?

A. The majority of the people, I think, would not go.

Q. Taking these youths, will you prevent them from going to these?

A. Yes. Up to a certain age.

Q. Your objection is only up to a certain age?

A. Yes. Because they are not used to that kind of social life.

Q. But don't you think that the proper remedy for that is to familiarise them with it?

A. With what?

Q. By letting them see the thing. There is absolutely no harm in it?

A. It might have a bad effect on them. Especially these sex films will be harmful to them.

Q. Even in his life he comes in contact with such things when he grows up?

A. My objection is only to boys of impressionable age. They are not used to see these things from their infancy.

Q. You won't prohibit people like you from going?

A. No. Because I have seen the thing and I am used to it.

Q. But taking the case of a man who is 25 years of age in India, you won't call him a youth of impressionable age? He must be of age between 15 and 21 if he is to be called a youth of impressionable age?

A. For him I will not have any objection at all.

Q. But he also has not seen the things nor he is accustomed to them?

A. But he has lost the desire to do things which he sees. He will not run away with the ideas with which a youth of an impressionable age would.

Q. What is the idea with which the youth of impressionable age would run away? Probably sexuality?

A. Yes.

Q. But that thing exists even as regards the man of 25.

A. He will think more seriously about it.

Q. What is the harm done supposing he runs away with that idea? It will correct itself later on.

A. Probably he will misunderstand the thing. When he comes of proper age he will probably understand it better.

Q. Do you think that he merely thinks about it at that time and then forgets it or do you think really, that even after the entertainment is over, he broods over what he saw and thinks about it?

A. Generally speaking he ought to forget, because it is only for the sake of amusement he goes there, but the power of suggestion cannot be neglected.

Q. Do you think the censorship is adequate?

A. I think it is.

Q. And yet you have some apprehension about these boys of impressionable age?

A. Yes. I have.

Q. What do you say should be done for this? Do you say that they should be prohibited from going to the cinema?

A. Children below the age of 12 should be prohibited.

Q. But the impressionable age lasts longer?

A. Then of course, it is a recreation. They will think better after that. There is more objection for children under 12.

Q. Do you suggest that they should be prohibited altogether or that they should be provided with special shows?

A. Special days might be allotted to them when suitable films may be shown.

Q. Do you think it will be a paying proposition to the exhibitor?

A. I cannot say that.

Q. Will children go in large numbers?

A. If they have got the will to do so they will go. If admission is free they will go in larger numbers.

Q. Supposing admission is charged for, will they—I mean children of the age you said—go?

A. I think so.

Q. Do you think the film industry requires any help?

A. If the industry is developed in this country it would be very good.

Q. The question is that the industry should be developed in this country?

A. In that case Government should do something to develop it. It would be a very good thing if the Government does it.

Q. Why do you say it will be a good thing?

A. People will be appointed in that connection and many will be saved from starvation. There will be a new opening for talent.

Q. For providing means of amusement to the people what do you think Government should do?

A. I cannot say that. But Government should do something to encourage the growth of this industry.

Q. Do you approve of any arrangement by which any reciprocal arrangement could be made between India and other countries of the Empire for the purpose of the exchange of films of one country with another. In this way the people of the two countries will understand each other in a better way.

A. Something should be done to bring them closer together.

Q. In that way you say some reciprocal arrangement should be made?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you take interest in educational institutions here?

A. In what way?

Q. By being on the management or in some other way?

A. No.

Q. You don't know what effect the cinema has on the student population?

A. No. I cannot say that. I don't think there is any evil influence on them.

Q. Have you been in the West?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you think there is much difference between the films shown in England and those shown here, so far as Western films are concerned?

A. I don't think so.

Q. Did you meet the Social Hygiene Delegation when they came to this country last year?

A. No.

Q. Probably they never came here?

A. I don't know.

Mr. Green: Your only apprehension of harm from the films is on the minds of children under 12 years?

A. Yes.

Q. I take it that parental authority still exists in force in India?

A. Yes.

Q. You think it is more for the parents to check their boys?

A. Yes. I only said that for people of tender age, say up to the age of 12, it is distinctly harmful.

Q. Do you think the law can do anything in this matter?

A. If children's performances are arranged it would be a step in the right direction.

Q. In that case should Government come forward to say that children below 12 should go only for the children's performances? Will not that give rise to great difficulties?

A. The cinema proprietor will have to decide about this.

Q. The parents ought to know it?

A. Yes. They will know it in the long run. Children up to a certain age should not be permitted to go to the cinema.

Chairman: You think a mere local announcement of that provision would possibly bring home to the parents that fact?

A. I think so.

Oral Evidence of Mr. B. V. R. RAO, Manager, the Craddock Cinema, Nagpur, on Tuesday, the 7th February 1928.

Chairman: What is your interest in the cinema?

A. I am the Manager of the Craddock cinema.

Q. When was it started?

A. In July 1926.

Q. Was it started by you?

A. Yes, by me.

Q. Before that, nobody was running any cinema there?

A. No.

Q. What induced you to take to this?

A. It is a paying business in Nagpur.

Q. You built the cinema yourself?

A. Yes.

Q. And you run the exhibition yourself?

A. Yes.

Q. You have got the necessary projecting machine and all that?

A. Yes.

Q. How much have you spent on the theatre?

A. We have spent nearly Rs. 24,000 on building and machinery; we have got our own installation, our own oil engine and dynamo.

Q. Only for this purpose?

A. Yes.

Q. The whole thing costs Rs. 24,000?

A. Yes. The tin shed alone cost us Rs. 14,000. It is the biggest cinema in Nagpur. It includes the machinery; but the land is rented.

Q. On long lease?

A. On a short lease of five years. But the lease can be extended.

Q. You have been running the cinema since you started it in 1926?

A. Yes.

Q. You give daily performances?

A. Yes.

Q. Western or Indian films?

A. Sometimes English shows and sometimes Indian shows.

Q. Which do you find more paying?

A. Indian pictures.

Q. On the days you show Indian pictures, you get more?

A. Yes.

Q. Then why don't you show Indian pictures only?

A. Indian pictures are a bit costly and I am not able to get a good supply of Indian pictures.

Q. Or the people do not want a change?

A. Not that.

Q. You don't think the audience will get disgusted?

A. No, certainly not.

Q. Or will the audience require sometimes different films?

A. Generally they don't; but sometimes they would want serials.

Q. Where is this theatre?

A. Between the city and the civil lines; it is in the centre of the locality.

Q. You are getting a fair return on your investment?

A. Yes, we have been working at a profit.

Q. Are you in association with any circuit?

A. We were in association with Madan theatres last year.

Q. Till 1927?

A. Yes.

Q. And you have now broken that?

A. Yes.

Q. You are now working independently?

A. Yes.

Q. How long have you been working?

A. From 1926, but independently from 1927.

Q. For how many months were you in association with Madans?

A. For about nine months.

Q. As an independent exhibitor, do you get films easily or do you find any difficulty?

A. We find some difficulty in Nagpur because there is competition with the opposition.

Q. Local opposition, you mean?

A. Yes. Generally if they make an agreement with Indian producers for films, we do not get such films.

Q. So they also show Indian films?

A. Yes,

Q. You want only Indian films?

A. Yes and serials.

Q. You don't care for other western films?

A. No.

Q. Why is that?

A. It is not paying to us, because our audience is quite different.

Q. They won't see the western social dramas?

A. They don't care for them.

Q. Do you experience any difficulty in getting western pictures?

A. We get all American and German pictures very easily.

Q. From whom?

A. There are many agents in Bombay.

Q. It is only about Indian pictures then that you find some difficulty? You have to pay more for them?

A. Yes, we pay Rs. 60 a day for a film, and they don't give for less than four days.

Q. They want four days' run?

A. Yes.

Q. Whether you run it or not, you have to pay?

A. Yes.

Q. I suppose they attract good houses?

A. Yes, they do attract good houses only for two days.

Q. Are they profitable to you on those terms?

A. Yes.

Q. But I notice a general tone of discontent in your mind?

A. Owing to the non-supply of films in time, I am unable to work properly.

Q. You don't complain about the rate, I suppose?

A. No.

Q. You are not getting a regular supply, that is your complaint?

A. Yes.

Q. How many films do you require in a year?

A. We require eight films in a month.

Q. Indian and Western films combined?

A. Yes.

Q. How many Western and how many Indian?

A. Three Western films and five Indian.

Q. Your programme is for eight films, five Indian and three Western films?

A. Yes.

Q. And these five Indian films you are not able to get regularly?

A. No.

Q. Is it due to lack of production?

A. I think so.

Q. You get your films from the Bombay side?

A. Yes.

Q. Why did you not try Burmese productions?

A. They are not appreciated in the Central Provinces.

Q. How do you know?

A. We have tried Madans' Indian films and we have not been successful.

Q. Produced in Bengal, I think?

A. Yes,

Q. People here do not like them?

A. No.

Q. What is it that you showed?

A. "Pati Bhakthi" and "Santa". "Ramayan" in 21 parts also we have shown. It was also a thorough failure.

Q. It is running in Rangoon just now?

A. It might be appreciated in Rangoon and Madras too, but it is not here.

Q. What is the reason for that?

A. The Deccanese people live here and they require the Deccanese mode of living, style, etc.

Q. That is, they want Bombay films?

A. Yes, dealing with Mahratta life, etc.

Q. What do you propose to do to get your films all right?

A. We should have more Indian film producers.

Q. Why don't you go in for that line?

A. Want of capital.

Q. That is the only thing which stands in your way?

A. Yes.

Q. What about actors, actresses and scenario writers?

A. We have got enough of them.

Q. If you have capital to-morrow, you would start a producing concern here?

A. Yes.

Q. Have you got good photographers?

A. We have got the best photographers among Indian film producers. There is also lack of support from Government.

Q. For what?

A. Support for taking photographs of important places and sceneries. Suppose we want some outside photographs, we are not allowed to take them; if we want to have photographs of horsemen, soldiers, etc., we will have to go to Jaipur and to the Native Chiefs and pay for that.

Mr. Green: Are you speaking from personal experience?

A. I have been hearing all this from the producers.

Q. But you have no personal experience?

A. No.

Chairman: You think there should be such facilities given to producers?

A. Yes.

Q. That is, if they are not given already, they should be given now?

A. Yes.

Q. You want that there should be some recognised authority to whom you can apply for all these things?

A. Yes.

Q. At present you do not know to whom to apply perhaps?

A. We do not know.

Q. You may be applying to the Home department, whereas the Political department may be dealing with it?

A. It might be.

Q. Do you think there should be a cinema department attached to the Government?

A. Yes; there must be a standard studio.

Q. To be established by the Government?

A. Yes.

Q. For what purpose?

A. They have now got agricultural model colleges, etc. Similarly there may be a model studio.

Q. So that producers may follow it and perhaps use the experts which the Government may employ? Do you think it will be a good thing to do?

A. Yes, a very good thing. It will be paying also. In that case, we will also be getting good actors from respectable families.

Q. How do you get over the money difficulty then?

A. That question I cannot answer.

Q. Are you able to get your serials all right now?

A. We do get them, but it is costly sometimes to get good ones.

Q. Have you heard any complaints about films which are shown here, i.e., the serials?

A. People do not complain. The ordinary labour classes appreciate the serials of an educative nature; they don't appreciate serials of a dull nature.

Q. They want some stunts, some fighting and all that?

A. Yes.

Q. Have you ever thought of becoming a producer yourself?

A. No.

Q. You will be content with being an exhibitor?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you know if there is any "block booking" among exhibitors?

A. I do not know.

Q. Have you visited studios yourself anywhere?

A. Yes, in Bombay and Poona.

Q. So you are in touch with the production side?

A. Yes.

Q. How many cities are there in the Central Provinces with a population of 10,000 or more?

A. I do not know.

Q. Do you think there is much scope for new cinemas in this province?

A. There have been many cinema companies here, but within hardly three months after they started, they had to close down.

Q. Why is that, if it is, as you say, a paying proposition?

A. Unless it is worked on a systematic basis, it cannot get on.

Q. You mean people who do not know the work take it up?

A. Yes; there must be a restriction in granting licenses also.

Q. Why?

A. The man who obtains the license must understand the rules and regulations of the cinema and how to conduct the business. At present he does not know anything about it. For instance my proprietor does not know anything about this at all.

Q. He has asked you to manage it?

A. Yes.

Q. What is the harm in that?

A. It is difficult for the man who works it.

Q. If he gets a good return on his money invested on the cinema, why should he bother himself about anything?

A. He only thinks about money; but it is difficult to get money from him for proper work.

Q. But the confidential manager will be competent to do it?

A. But the proprietor also should be induced to spend. That is difficult.

- Q. He is over-cautious you mean, he does not allow a free hand?
- A. Yes, because of his lack of knowledge of the art.
- Q. What price have you to pay for western films?
- A. We pay on percentage basis; 40 and 60.
- Q. For western pictures?
- A. Yes.
- Q. With whom?
- A. With the ordinary agents in Bombay.
- Q. With whom have you dealings?
- A. I have not got any recognised film producer for the English films.
- Q. You get what you can get from anybody?
- A. Yes.
- Q. How many weeks' programme have you got now with you?
- A. I have got it for the whole month.
- Q. For the next month you will have to arrange?
- A. Yes.
- Q. When will you be ready for the next month?
- A. I will be ready by the 25th, when I go to Bombay to make my selection.
- Q. Every month you go to Bombay?
- A. Generally it is better to go to Bombay. Otherwise, we won't get the thing we require.
- Q. You have got a hall to accommodate about 1,400 people. Are you able to fill that hall every day?
- A. No, our average attendance is 800.
- Mr. Green: But you can seat more, about 1,500?
- A. Yes; but it is normally only 800.
- Chairman: Is your hall used for any other purpose?
- A. No; it is used only for the cinema.
- Q. Do you apply any proportion of your profits to the trade itself?
- A. No.
- Q. You use it all for your own purposes?
- A. Yes.
- Q. Are the cinema owners getting on well in Nagpur?
- A. In Nagpur they are quite all right.
- Q. Where do they not get on well?
- A. In the mufassil.
- Q. You mean the population there is not sufficient?
- A. The population is quite sufficient, but the difficulty is that they are not worked properly.
- Q. You mean they don't select proper pictures?
- A. They don't cater what is required.
- Q. They don't study the whims of the communities?
- A. No.
- Q. What is your suggestion to induce a better class of people to take up exhibition?
- A. I do not know how to answer the question.
- Mr. Green: Do your proprietors own any other cinema?
- A. No, they own only this one.

- Q. They have not thought of opening any other in the city?
- A. They are thinking of opening one more in the Nagpur city.
- Q. Why exactly did you give up your relations with Madans? If it is confidential, I don't want it?
- A. It is not confidential. It was not paying to us. We were on the ordinary percentage basis without minimum guarantee. Afterwards they began to fix minimum guarantee, and so we broke up.
- Q. You say the present percentage is 40—60; who gets the 40?
- A. The supplier gets the 40.
- Q. Have you to meet the advertising charges?
- A. Yes, everything.
- Q. They just supply the films, that is all?
- A. Yes.
- Q. The majority of your audience is uneducated?
- A. Yes.
- Q. Do you find that they follow the stories reasonably well?
- A. They follow all Indian stories well and serials also they follow very well.
- Q. Even if the titles are in English?
- A. Yes.
- Q. I suppose very few of them can read English?
- A. They do not read, but they follow the picture and they are far better in that respect than even English-knowing people.
- Q. They know the hero, the heroine, the villain, etc.?
- A. Yes.
- Q. Do they express their approval or disapproval?
- A. Yes, they do. When we advertised the film "William Duncan" we used to get a good gathering.
- Q. Do they not show their disapproval of the villain?
- A. No.
- Q. I take it that in these serials the villain is usually worsted in the end? Do they like it?
- A. They like to see the end; because when they go out of the cinema, they express their approval of all his acts, and in the end they pity him.
- Q. Then they approve of the villain?
- A. Yes.
- Q. Are you quite sure of that?
- A. Yes.
- Q. I have seen a serial in which, when the heroine was in danger, when attacked by three men, the audience actually cried out. You say you won't get that here?
- A. I don't think so.
- Q. Do you think they actually copy the villain in his criminal ways?
- A. I cannot say so; they express this much when going out of the compound, that the story was very good, the villain acted very nicely, etc., and they come again for the same serial. They used to attend a second show also.
- Q. Why do they like the villain; is it because he does wrong, or because he is a strong man and does so many feats?
- A. I think they chiefly like his bravery, his daring, etc.
- Q. You do not really think there is any moral effect?
- A. There might be.

Written Statement of Mr. S. N. PAWANGADKER, Representative, Maharashtra Film Company, Kolhapur, dated the 7th February 1928.

Representation.—I represent the Maharashtra Film Company of Kolhapur.

Duration of the Company.—The Company started in the year of 1919, i.e., it has 8 years' standing. It is a private concern.

Pictures.—Uptill now, we have produced 13 films, out of which 6 are historical, 6 religious and one social.

Historical.

1. Sinhgarrh.
2. Treasure of Kalyan.
3. Rana Hamir.
4. Sati Padmini.
5. A check to the king.
6. Netaji Palkar.

Mythological.

1. Muraliwala.
2. Krishnawatar.
3. Bhakta Pralhad.
4. Maya Bazar.
5. Gaj Gouri.
6. Savitri.

Social.

1. *Indian Shylack.*

Why picture making is slow.—We pay more attention to the quality than to the quantity and further financial difficulties. The capital being very small, we have to wait till the collection of the picture produced is sufficiently accumulated to enable us to start the next picture. The capitalists want more pictures, irrespective of the quality, which our proprietors cannot accept and hence we could not get sufficient capital. Two of our historical films (Treasure of Kalyan and Sati Padmini) were shown at the Wembley Exhibition in 1925, where they were very much appreciated.

Censorship.—In producing historical pictures, we have to bring out historical facts and we want the Board of Censors to be more liberal in censoring such pictures. In historical films, one cannot avoid fights between different communities of India and censors are getting shyer and shyer to pass such pictures. We want the improvement in the attitude of the Board in that respect. This applies universally whether Marathas are shown at a disadvantage or the Mohomedans are shown so.

Central Board of Censors.—The Central Board should be placed in a place like Bombay. The composition of that Board should be as follows:—

1. One Responsible Police Officer.
2. Three public men of different interest.
3. Three men representing the film industry.

Capital.—If the Government cannot give subsidies by way of investment, they can ask some of the leading producers of this country to produce propaganda films, which the Government should buy and circulate them throughout the country. Another help, Government can give, is the free use of old historical and monumental buildings and of regimental and Police force, etc., for being filmed.

All other items referred to in the questionnaire have been fully answered through the representatives of the Association of Producers, while the Committee was in Bombay.

Tuition.—We give tuitions in different subjects of the film industry in our studio at Kolhapur and it is a matter of pride to mention that 4 of our students are doing well in different studios at Poona and Bombay.

General.—By the result, so far achieved by our Company, in this industry, we are confident that we can produce pictures of as high a standard as that of

foreign pictures, provided we get facilities from the Government as mentioned above.

If the Committee desires to see one of our historical pictures, we shall be pleased to arrange for its exhibition at Delhi.

I shall be very glad if the Committee be pleased to find time to see our studio at Kolhapur at its convenience.

Oral Evidence of Mr. S. N. PAWANGADKER, Representative Maharashtra Film Company, Kolhapur, on Tuesday, the 7th February 1928.

Chairman: How long have you been connected with this?

A. Nearly five years.

Q. As what?

A. As manager.

Q. You are the manager of the producing studio?

A. Not of the studio but of the booking office.

Q. What do you mean by booking office?

A. The person who deals in hiring films for exhibition.

Q. That is, you are connected with the distribution work?

A. Yes.

Q. The company is the producer and makes its own arrangements for distribution and you are the manager of the distribution department?

A. Yes; also looking after the interests of the company, where the picture is being shown and all that.

Q. You distribute and watch the work of distribution?

A. Yes.

Q. You say in your statement that this company has been in existence for eight years and that it is a private concern. How many partners are there?

A. Three partners.

Q. Three brothers?

A. Three separate individuals.

Q. You have produced only 13 pictures in all?

A. Yes.

Q. All these eight years?

A. Yes.

Q. It comes to one or two at the most a year?

A. No. In 1922 there was a big fire in the studio and almost the whole studio was burnt. We had to renew the whole thing, and it was very difficult to pull on.

Q. How many films do you produce in a year?

A. At least four, not more than that.

Q. You are not able to produce more?

A. No.

Q. Did you go to Wembley yourself?

A. No.

Q. Who went?

A. One of my friends.

Q. One of your films was shown there?

A. Two films, "The Treasure of Kalyan" and "Sati Padmini".

- Q. That was in the Indian section I suppose?
 A. Yes, and they were highly appreciated there.
 Q. What did you get out of that?
 A. Nothing.
 Q. It was not a commercial show?
 A. No, only arranged for exhibition.
 Q. You mean the entrance into the Indian pavilion entitled the people to go in and have a look at it?
 A. Yes.
 Q. You did not charge separate fees for that?
 A. No.
 Q. It was a free show in the Indian section?
 A. Yes.
 Q. You say under the heading "Why picture making is slow": "We pay more attention to the quality than to the quantity and further financial difficulties". You have to realise first what you invest on one film before you produce another?
 A. Yes.
 Q. Have you no permanent establishment?
 A. We have nearly 60 persons in our staff.
 Q. How many actresses?
 A. Nearly eight.
 Q. And they are all paid by the month?
 A. Yes.
 Q. Do they all live on the premises?
 A. No, they live apart.
 Q. They come and work for definite hours every day?
 A. Yes.
 Q. Who does your photography?
 A. There are two cameramen there.
 Q. How did they learn their work?
 A. They have no special training, they do it only by practice.
 Q. They had no training anywhere?
 A. No.
 Q. None of your people have been away from the country for learning the art?
 A. No.
 Q. Why don't you send one of your cameramen to learn the art?
 A. There is the difficulty of finance.
 Q. Who does the direction?
 A. One of the proprietors, Mr. B. K. Mistry.
 Q. Has he any experience in that line?
 A. He has been working for nearly 14 years in the line.
 Q. Where?
 A. In Kolhapur.
 Q. He has picked it up by practice?
 A. Yes. He first made a camera and then produced some three or four pictures in his studio.
 Q. Is that camera used now?
 A. Not now. At times when there is necessity for two or three cameras, we use it.
 Q. How much money have you spent on the studio in Kolhapur?

- A. Nearly Rs. 40,000.
 Q. How much did these thirteen films you have produced cost you?
 A. One film costs from Rs. 10,000 to Rs. 15,000.
 Q. What is the length of the film?
 A. Generally seven to eight thousand feet.
 Q. You waste raw film in order to produce a picture?
 A. Yes.
 Q. For a film of 8,000 feet what is the wastage on an average?
 A. About 4,000 will be the wastage.
 Q. So you utilise 12,000 feet in order to get 8,000 feet film?
 A. Yes.
 Q. Which is the last one which you produced.
 A. "Savitri".
 Q. When was it produced?
 A. Nearly four months back.
 Q. Where is it being shown now?
 A. On the Madras side. Generally all mythological pictures go to Madras. The historicals go to Bombay. With the people of Madras historical pictures do not go well. They know nothing of our history. It is purely local. "The Treasure of Kalyan" is from the life of Shivaji. The other things are all universal.
 Q. Madras theatres go in for your mythological films.
 A. Yes.
 Q. How much have you realised on "Savitri" now?
 A. I don't know exactly.
 Q. That boy who acted Sri Krishna in last night's picture, how much does he get?
 A. He draws Rs. 40 a month. He is a local boy.
 Q. You were complaining about the Censorship Board in respect of historical films. Would you have any objection to subjecting your scenarios to the Censorship Board?
 A. We have no objection to producing them to the Censor before production. It all depends upon the action, not on the scenario.
 Q. What is it you want?
 A. I think communal questions should not be taken into consideration in censoring films.
 Q. You mean they pay much attention to it now?
 A. Yes. Last month the Bombay Board banned "Hara Hara Mahadeo" and the producers had only to change the name, only the title of the film.
 Q. They are sensitive to these communal susceptibilities?
 A. Yes.
 Q. Where do you get your films censored?
 A. In Bombay.
 Q. What is the object in a Central Board?
 A. When once a film is passed by the Central Censor Board there will be no objection in any province and there will be currency for the film throughout the country. Now the Bombay censors pass a film and it is being objected to by the Bengal Board. "Sinhagad" was objected to in Burma.
 Q. What was the objection?
 A. I do not know.
 Q. Who is your proprietor?
 A. Mr. B. K. Mistry. He learned the art from practice.
 Q. Why don't you send for an expert?

- A. The difficulty is finance.
- Q. We will be glad to visit your studio but it is in an Indian State. Unfortunately we could not do it. It is in Kolhapur itself.
- A. Yes.
- Q. You have all the modern equipment?
- A. Generally.
- Q. I noticed that some of the dresses worn by the girls were rather modern shaped.
- A. It is all arranged according to their customs.
- Q. Who advises you in the matter?
- A. Our Director, Mr. B. K. Mistri.
- Q. You do not consult any archæologist or oriental scholar?
- A. He generally consults them.
- Q. In training matters?
- A. He generally consults Principal Solomon of the School of Arts, Bombay.
- Q. Yes, I noticed the film was produced by a capable hand.
- A. Mr. Mistri will be glad if the Government would give some scholarships to enable our men to go abroad and learn the art.
- Q. Do you get facilities for viewing outside places. Supposing you wanted to see the Government Fort, would you get the necessary permission.
- A. We generally ask the Maharajah of Kolhapur.
- Q. Do you go anywhere in British territory?
- A. We have not yet tried. We are going to Delhi for our new historical picture.
- Q. You cannot tell us from your practical experience whether you experienced any difficulty in the use of public places in British territory.
- A. I cannot say.
- Q. This is the first time you are going to try?
- A. Yes. Our experience in the States is of a varying nature. At one time the Maharajah gives permission and at other times permission is refused. We went to Indore. The authorities refused to give us permission to visit and shoot the places and we had to approach His Highness the Maharajah to get our permission.
- Q. You are maintaining a number of people but you are not doing enough work.
- A. It depends upon the quality.
- Q. Is there a demand for your pictures?
- A. We have a great demand and we are not able to supply. Other exhibitors are asking for our pictures because they are paying.
- Q. You are not able to supply.
- A. No.
- Q. You have produced 13 pictures and each of them paid you well.
- A. "The Indian Shylock" only failed. Others paid their way. On the whole it has been profitable.
- Q. You have not run into debt by keeping this studio although you are producing so slowly?
- A. On account of a fire we had to pay Rs. 40,000.
- Q. Supposing you laid down on paper all your accounts. "I spent so much on this film, I recovered so much and I want to produce more and more". Supposing you went to the public, could you not get more capital?
- A. I do not think so. If we show our accounts they demand more profits and more interest.
- Q. What you want is financial assistance on easy terms. If we give that, you can produce more.

- A. In that case not more than 8 in a year.
- Q. Of course you can shoot more if you expand your studio work?
- A. Yes.
- Mr. Green: I take it from your answers to the Chairman that Mr. B. K. Mistri is the hub of the whole concern, he manages, he directs, he prepares the scenarios, edits the films, and does almost everything?
- A. Yes.
- Q. Has he any capable lieutenants?
- A. Yes.
- Q. If anything happened to Mr. Mistri his assistants would continue?
- A. Yes, certainly.
- Q. He keeps the control?
- A. Yes.
- Q. I think he has been very successful in producing films?
- A. Yes.
- Q. He consults a few friends like Mr. Solomon, but the historical details and the art are all done by Mr. Mistri himself?
- A. Yes. The scenario writing must be in keeping with the history.
- Q. In your studio have you artificial lighting?
- A. Yes. The film we saw yesterday was shot with artificial lighting. We have arc lights, two of them.
- Q. You use those lights regularly for all studio work?
- A. Yes, generally we take our pictures outside with the help of the lights also, to get the depth of the shadow and so on. I brought these pictures to show them to you.
- Chairman: When was "Muraliwala" produced?
- A. Last year.
- Mr. Green: On what basis do you hire your films to exhibitors?
- A. In big towns we give them on the percentage basis but in small towns we take the pictures round—on the hire system.
- Q. When you do it on the percentage basis, what is your share?
- A. We generally get 45 in Bombay and in other places 50 per cent.
- Q. And do you advertise?
- A. All the advertisements and everything else is left to the exhibitors.
- Q. Your films are in good demand?
- A. Yes.
- Chairman: Are all of them in circulation now?
- A. Yes.
- Mr. Green: Do you move about with the films?
- A. When on percentage basis, one of our managers must go with the film.
- Q. So you move about certain territory?
- A. Yes.
- Q. You told us that your productions cost you 10 to 15 thousand rupees and you got fairly satisfactory hire. How long does it take you to recover the cost?
- A. Generally we get half the income in Bombay and half in the whole of India.
- Q. How long would it take for you to recover the cost of the film which we saw last night?
- A. Generally a year. We do not get more than Rs. 15,000 in a year. But in the smaller towns we get only Rs. 100 or 150.
- Q. We have heard of instances in which films costing Rs. 15,000 paid back a lakh of rupees in a year?

A. That is rather impossible because there are nearly 300 theatres in India. Out of this number 100 show only English pictures. Nearly 100 theatres are controlled by Madans and so there is difficulty in collecting.

Chairman: Have you tried to show your pictures in Calcutta?

A. Yes, through Madans. We get Rs. 200 a week, whereas in Bombay we get Rs. 3,000 or Rs. 4,000.

Mr. Green: It takes a year to get back your outlay on a film. How can you say it is profitable business if it takes such a long time?

A. We generally pull on with the earnings of the other old films.

Q. Since 1919 you produced 13 films. Are they all still in circulation.

A. Yes.

Q. Do you produce new copies of films?

A. Yes.

Q. How many copies in the first instance?

A. We take three copies.

Q. You refer to communal questions. Which will you prefer, that you should be given a free hand and allowed to produce as you think best, with the risk that the Police may stop a film as a public danger, or the present system by which the Censorship Board tries to prevent communal problems on the film?

A. If the Censors want our scenario first we shall give the scenario. But after spending so much if the Censor objects to the film, no company will prosper.

Q. Have you ever asked the Censors Board if they would like to see the scenario before you started to produce?

A. No.

Q. In the case of your films there was no objection, not as regards any one of them?

A. No.

DELHI.

*Oral Evidence of Mr. D. G. PHALKE, of Nasik, on Monday, the 13th February 1928.

Chairman: Mr. Phalke, are you interested in the cinema industry at present?

A. Yes, of course, a little. I have retired now but I am instructing my son in producing educational, instructional, industrial films, etc.

Q. Does he produce or import these films?

A. We produce these films ourselves.

Q. Has he produced educational films?

A. Now he is trying to undertake that line. He has practically studied the entire art from the Hindustan Film Company and other film producing companies in Bombay. I am going to England next month with my son to study the educational line.

Q. I suppose you began the film industry in this country?

A. Yes, I began the film industry in India in the year 1912.

Q. What was the company which you started?

A. It was simply called "Phalke's films".

Q. How many years did you work at it?

A. I worked at it for nearly 6 years and then we formed a company called the Hindustan Film Company.

Q. How many films did you produce?

A. I have produced pictures on about 20 subjects: chief of them being, Lanka Dahana, Sri Krishna Janma, Kaliya Mardana, etc.

Q. When did you cease to be connected with that Hindustan film company?

A. Practically last year.

Q. Till last year you were connected with that company?

A. Yes.

Q. Therefore, you have had a good many years of experience in the film line?

A. Yes.

Q. What are the defects in the production that you have noticed at present?

A. Almost all productions now in India lack in technique and artistic merit. The acting is not good and the photography especially is of the worst class. Nobody knows anything of the art.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: Now too?

A. Yes, even now it is the case. There is no doubt a noticeable improvement. Even now many people invest their money in this film industry without themselves knowing what type of cameras are to be purchased. Nobody tries to study the thing.

Chairman: That is the chief difficulty?

A. Yes.

Q. What is your suggestion to improve the condition?

A. My suggestion is that there must be a school established somewhere in India to teach the cinema industry, photography, acting, play and scenario writing, etc.

Q. Do you think one school will suffice for the whole of India?

A. I am not able to say that, but I wish to say that some restrictions ought to be placed on producing films in this country.

Q. How many students do you expect to go to the cinema school?

A. I think they will come in good numbers. There is nobody to teach the industry now.

Q. For how many years can you go on like that? You can't be training and sending out people without providing occupation for them?

A. They may be provided with suitable occupation.

Q. How to provide for them?

A. There are about two dozen companies working now.

Q. How many people can you employ in those two dozen companies?

A. At least five in each company.

Q. So that it comes to about 100 people and if you turn out 100 people every year, do you think there will be enough demand for them?

A. Well, there is a great demand for Indian films at present and I am sure they will find employment.

Mr. Green: Will the school be self-supporting?

A. I think it will be, but Government must also help it.

Chairman: What is your opinion about sending young people abroad to learn the art of the film industry?

A. I think that is a very good idea.

Q. Don't you think it will be more expensive?

A. Yes, it will be more expensive and so it is better to start a school in India. I, however, think that it is more desirable to send our young men abroad to study the technique of the art.

Q. What was your experience when you began the film industry in this country?

A. I had to do everything. I had to teach acting, I had to write the scenarios, do the photography and the actual projection too. Nobody knew anything in India about the industry in the year 1911.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: Were you in Poona?

A. No, I did my business at Nasik. I began the industry in Bombay but I preferred Nasik later on.

Chairman: Was your company well financed?

A. It was almost my self-sacrifice at the beginning.

Q. Is it now a paying concern, the Hindustan Film Company?

A. Yes, it is.

Q. How many films do they produce every year?

A. About 12 to 14. I think, to do the thing most satisfactorily one subject will take about 3 to 4 months to produce. Now-a-days nobody looks to the quality of the production. Every firm looks to the quantity alone. The business will never last if we don't look to the quality.

Q. In spite of the existing defects in the film industry in this country, you think the Indian films are popular?

A. Yes, certainly they are, but I am of opinion that more efforts should be made to produce them better.

Q. Do you think it will be any use if Government establishes a studio of their own?

A. I have not thought over the subject.

Q. You see, for instance, Government have to produce a certain amount of educational, agricultural, industrial and public health films. For producing such films, supposing Government establishes a studio and gets experts down for production, photography and all that and if such experts are made available at a reasonable rate of remuneration to private producing companies, would that be a good idea?

A. I think that is a most desirable thing to do.

Q. It will be a desirable thing in your opinion?

A. Yes, and I think it will help the industry also.

Q. Now there are producing companies in Bombay, Calcutta, Rangoon and other places. Do you think Government can produce their instructional films in those studios?

A. I think that could be done. I am doing the same thing at present. I am interested in the production of educational, moral, instructive and travel films.

Q. Will that clash with your scheme then?

A. I don't think it will clash with me. Perhaps, Government may think of helping me too.

Q. So you would have no complaint if Government establishes a studio?

A. I won't complain about it as it is for the benefit of India generally.

Q. Do you think there are private agencies who could be entrusted with the production of these educational films required by Government?

A. Of course, in the beginning these educational films rarely pay.

Q. You may take it they don't pay at all.

A. Then it is better for Government itself to do the work by establishing a studio of its own.

Q. And you think experts brought out by Government might be available for private work?

A. Yes.

Q. Now, were you interested in the exhibition side at all?

A. Yes, a little.

Q. Have you any suggestions to make on that side?

A. There is a great difficulty experienced by Indian producers. There is the monopoly of Madans who control nearly $\frac{1}{2}$ or $\frac{2}{3}$ of the cinema theatres in India and Burma. There is another firm in Bombay which is thinking of doing the same thing and there are Western pictures (serials) which run for nearly 4 to 8 weeks consecutively. So, private producers find it difficult to push their productions.

Q. You find that difficulty from actual experience?

A. Certain theatres run these serials continuously.

Q. You mean they book their programme in advance for lengthy periods?

A. Yes.

Q. Was that your practical experience?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you think the demand is still great?

A. Yes, certainly it is great: especially pictures on mythological subjects

Q. Is the difficulty you speak of still existing or has it ceased to exist?

A. Well, I find the difficulty even now.

Q. Where, in Bombay or Calcutta?

A. Everywhere, because our films are distributed all through India: sometimes we send our pictures to Burma, Singapore, etc.

Q. Is that difficulty now existing or is it fast disappearing?

A. It is not exactly disappearing. I find the difficulty even now.

Q. Did you or your company ever try Madans, to take your pictures?

A. They produce their own pictures.

Q. That is only natural, you can't complain about that?

A. I don't think we have ever tried that.

Q. So you don't think, from your practical experience, that they put difficulty in your way or in the way of your company?

A. No, they have never tried to do so. Sometimes, they have difficulties too.

Q. Now, do you think there is room for more cinema theatres in this country?

A. Yes, there is great room, but the pictures must be good. That is the thing.

Q. But that depends upon the producer?

A. Yes. There is a great demand for the cinema and people like it immensely.

Q. What is your suggestion for bringing more theatres into existence?

A. I have not thought over that at all.

Q. Do you think the cinema has got any pernicious influence upon the public?

A. No, I don't think so. I think though that love subjects should not be shown as largely as they are at present.

Q. But you don't think there is any bad effect from that?

A. I don't think there is any bad effect at all.

Q. You think it is better to minimise such scenes?

A. Yes. There are certain etiquettes and manners and customs peculiar to India. I know western manners and customs having gone to foreign countries.

Q. When you depict Western life I suppose you have to show it like that?

A. There must be some improvement, at least for films that are to be imported into this country.

Q. From your knowledge do you think the films will lose their value if you omit such scenes?

A. I don't think so.

Q. You only want a little stricter censorship in the case of Western films imported into this country?

A. Yes, that is right.

Mr. Green: You say that Indian films are very popular but at the same time you say they lack technique, photography and artistic merit. Do you think that they will retain their popularity even though they are not improved?

A. I think they will be popular still.

Q. But if they go on producing as they do now, do you think they will retain their popularity?

A. Their popularity will decrease then.

Q. They will cease to be popular with the people who frequent the cinemas?

A. After a time, yes.

Q. How much do you spend on an average film at present, approximately?

A. Say, about 10,000 rupees.

Q. And you get a good return on that investment, I suppose?

A. Yes.

Q. How long does it take you to recover the money laid out on each film?

A. Generally a film should last at least for 4 months, but sometimes they are spoiled owing to bad operation and bad machines within 3 or 4 weeks.

Q. And therefore you have to make more copies, I suppose?

A. Yes. The usual projection speed should be about 3 to 4 thousand feet per hour but sometimes the projectors even show about 8 to 10 thousand feet per hour with the result the film is easily spoiled.

Q. Is not the orthodox rate 4,000 feet per hour?

A. Yes, it is a good average. If only 6,000 feet is shown every 1½ hours then the films will last longer.

Q. But then, the cost of making a fresh positive is not very great?

A. Though it is not very great it does not pay well.

Q. Can you tell me how long it will take you to get back your capital spent on a film, say, an average film? Six months?

A. Yes, it will take about six months.

Q. After that period all income will be pure profit?

A. Yes.

Q. If you want to improve your films you must spend more money, I suppose?

A. Yes. At present though people spend their money lavishly they don't care for the quality of the film produced.

Q. You mean, they don't know how to use their money to the maximum benefit?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you think it will be any use to try and get experts from outside into India?

A. Yes, that will be good.

Q. Could these film producing companies afford to do it?

A. I think they should be able to do so. But unfortunately, the present companies are satisfied with their present productions. They don't care for the future.

Q. Supposing the time comes when, as you and I anticipate, the people who go to see the films get tired of these bad productions, then they will have to spend more money, I suppose?

A. Yes.

Q. Supposing they spend half a lakh of rupees on a film would they be able to get back their capital within 6 months?

A. Possibly not, they may take about a year to realise their capital investment.

Q. Do you know how many theatres there are in India, cinema theatres, I mean?

A. About 350.

Q. You can't show every picture in every theatre. If there are 15 theatres in a city, possibly you may show a picture in 2 or 3 picture houses, I suppose?

A. Yes, that is right.

Q. Do you think if you improve the quality of Indian films you will have a wider market abroad? Do you think a well made Indian film will command a good audience if shown in England?

A. Not the present ones produced in India, but well made ones may command a good audience. I have exhibited some of my own films in England in London such as "Savitri," "Harishchandra," and other films and the press in London remarked "From the technical point of view Phalke's films are excellent".

Q. Did you make money in England by the exhibition of your films?

A. I did not do it in a commercial way.

Chairman: You did not try to market your films there?

A. No.

Q. Why did you not do so if you found your films attractive there?

A. I had not sufficient working capital with me to do so. As a matter of fact, there was a big demand for my films. They asked for 25 and 30 copies of the same. It was then that I formed the Hindustan Film Company.

Q. Do you think if you can get sufficient capital you can produce films in India which will command an international market?

A. Yes, I do think so.

Mr. Green: I should like to be able to agree with you.

Chairman: Can you get capital in India?

A. Yes, I can.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: At a higher rate of interest, I suppose?

A. Yes.

Chairman: If you borrow money at a higher rate of interest, then it will not be paying?

A. In spite of it, I think, it will be paying.

Mr. Green: Have you ever thought of trying to interest people of other countries in your company?

A. That was my intention, but after I went into partnership I could not do so.

Q. Do you think it will be a good thing to have a joint effort by an English and an Indian film company to make Indian films and distribute them abroad as well as in India?

A. Yes, it is desirable.

Q. Is it practicable?

A. I think it is.

Q. Who actually distributed your films?

A. I did it myself.

Q. Did you send your men all over India to market your films?

A. Yes, in the beginning, but now exhibitors come to us.

Q. Your company has no other branches, I suppose?

A. Yes, our chief office is at Bombay, then we have branches at Calcutta and Madras.

Q. But you have no agents in other parts of India?

A. Yes, there are some.

Q. You said you sent your films to Singapore. Had you success there?

A. Yes, it was a success. We have sent films to Singapore, Rangoon and other places.

Q. Have you ever tried to send your films to East Africa?

A. Yes, we have sent some of our films to Zanzibar.

Mr. Neogy: You said you have formed a company. Is it a limited company?

A. It is a partnership business.

Q. May I know the capital of the firm?

A. Three lakhs of rupees.

Q. What capital do you think would be necessary to start an up-to-date, first rate producing concern?

A. Not more than 3 lakhs is required.

Q. Even for producing pictures which may have an international market?

A. Then we may have 5 lakhs of rupees.

Q. Will that be sufficient?

A. Yes.

Q. Will it be difficult to raise 5 lakhs of rupees?

A. Yes, I think so.

Q. You said there is some advantage in locating your concern at Nasik instead of Bombay?

A. Yes, there are some climatic advantages.

Q. Do you think it will be cheaper to run a concern at Nasik than in Bombay?

A. Yes, I think so.

Q. Do you entertain a permanent staff of actors and actresses at Nasik?

A. Yes. We have a permanent staff.

Q. How many?

A. About 100 permanent people. Exactly 95.

Q. Don't you have to take the help of any outside amateur actor or actress?

A. Never.

Q. How many photographers and directors have you got in your establishment?

A. Three photographers and 3 or 4 directors.

Q. Where did they get their training?

A. I myself trained them.

Chairman: I noticed some boys and girls. Do you have girls also?

A. Yes. There are, of course, a certain number of girls. At present there are on the roll 14 girls.

Mr. Neogy: Are all of them permanently employed?

A. Yes.

Q. How many pictures do you generally turn out a year?

A. Say, a picture a month. I myself don't like this idea but we produce one a month. I would be satisfied with three or four, of course the best, a year.

Q. Would it be correct to say that you specialise only in mythological subjects?

A. Yes.

Q. You have not produced any social plays?

A. We have produced two or three social plays and two or three historical plays too. But the mythological dramas are more popular and more paying all over India.

Q. When you say that you can get back your capital in the course of 5 or 6 months, you mean mythological stories?

A. Yes.

Q. In the case of social dramas it would take a longer time?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you think it is better for concerns to specialise in particular lines, that is to say, to specialise either in mythological subjects or educational or historical?

A. Yes.

Q. You are thinking of exclusively dealing with educational subjects?

A. Yes.

Q. What arrangements have you made for giving your son a training abroad in the line of production of educational films?

A. I myself am going to take him. I will take him to several schools and studies and I will try my best to make him an expert.

Q. Are you quite sure of getting the necessary facilities for getting your son trained?

A. Yes. I am.

Q. Have you corresponded with any producing concern or any institution outside India for this purpose?

A. No. But I shall first go to the Editor of "The Bioscope," my old friend. I am sure he will help me.

Q. In what branch do you propose to train your son? As Director or Scenario-writer or Photographer?

A. I am going to train him in all these things.

Q. You are going to make him an expert in all these things?

A. Yes. He will supervise everything.

Q. How long do you think it will take for your son to pick up sufficient knowledge in all these branches?

A. As for his photography, I am more than half satisfied.

Q. Do you mean to say that he has got sufficient training already?

A. For the last, say, 8 or 10 years I have been training him in all the branches.

Q. Would you be prepared to support a scheme under which, for instance, the preliminary training in all these branches might be given in India and then selected people sent out to other countries to perfect their training in those lines?

A. Yes.

Q. Or do you consider that the training should be given wholly in India or wholly in England? Which do you think is preferable?

A. Giving the training wholly outside India will be more expensive; otherwise that would be good.

Q. So you would approve the principle of giving the preliminary training here and then sending out selected people outside?

A. Yes. Because there is no facility afforded here in India for perfecting their knowledge; they must be sent over there.

Q. How long do you think it would take your son to perfect his training?

A. After coming over here, after his training in Europe he will have to practice for a year or two.

Q. How long will he stay in Europe?

A. For six months only.

Q. Will that be sufficient?

A. Yes. I am taking him there only to fill up the gaps and to show him all things practically.

Q. In this scheme of training you would be prepared to support a study in foreign countries only for six months?

A. That will be sufficient for him at least.

Q. You mean to say that for a man who has got the training that your son has?

A. Yes. For a man of his standard a period of six months is quite sufficient.

Q. How do you propose to employ your son after he gets trained in this line? Do you propose to start a concern purely for the production of educational pictures after coming back?

A. Yes. And also small dramatic subjects, which would run one reel or two reels. I mean to produce these also, that is to say, subjects of instructional value along with educational subjects.

Q. Where do you hope to sell or find a market for pictures of this kind?

A. I am going to create a demand for my films. I am going to supply them as side films to the existing cinema shows. All of them will be only one reel and that one reel may contain about 200 to 300 feet industrial subjects, the same length of educational subjects, a small comic, some magic and things like that. That is the first idea. Then I am going to have some shows in villages too, with small projectors and with no electric lights. I have that idea too in my mind.

Mr. Green: How would you show them with no electric lights?

A. There are certain machines for that. I mean peep shows. Some 20 to 40 people can look through at one time. They will be more popular in villages. It is a different popular line after all, costing less.

Mr. Neogy: What capital do you propose to have for this venture of yours?

A. Not more than Rs. 50,000.

Q. Would that suffice for production and exhibition?

A. Yes. That will do for everything.

Q. Would you depend upon Government to any extent in this matter?

A. No.

Q. You have not corresponded with any Government on this matter?

A. Never. But I hope that after a few months the Government will like my ideas and will help me if I go to them.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: If you go to them?

A. Yes. If I go to them, say, after a year.

Mr. Neogy: Take the case of a film regarding public health. Wherefrom do you expect to get the scenario? Who will write the scenario for a public health film? You will have to go to some public health expert?

A. Yes. Of course.

Q. And for that purpose would you not like to depend upon a Government agency to give you the expert advice?

A. If there be any such help I shall certainly do so.

Q. There are public health authorities and so also educational authorities?

A. Yes. Those would greatly help me.

Q. Supposing Government were to undertake the production of such films themselves, would they not come into conflict with your venture?

A. No. There is a vast field.

Q. Have you consulted any show men, that is to say, any manager of the existing cinema shows?

A. They are ready to have my films as side films. All the theatre proprietors are willing to take my subjects.

Chairman: Have you produced any film at all?

A. Not now. I produced "Telegram," "Glass Factory" and such other industrial films five or six years ago. They were popular at that time. Now the producers run after long subjects of 7,000 or 8,000 feet. Nobody cares for such small subjects though they might be useful and paying. Even though they are worthless subjects they go after long films. Small films must pay. They will be paying even in big towns as well as in small villages.

Mr. Coatman: I understand you are one of the pioneers in India in the film producing industry?

A. Yes.

Q. I was not here when your evidence began. Therefore would you mind telling me how many years you have been in the business?

A. Sixteen years.

Q. During that time have you been to England or America or abroad anywhere?

A. Yes. I have been to England twice during that time.

Q. And while you were there did you study developments in technique and appliances?

A. Yes.

Q. When did you go to England?

A. In 1912 and in 1914.

Q. Since 1914 there has been great development in the mechanical appliances and in technique?

A. Yes.

Q. How have you kept in touch with all these developments since 1914?

A. I have, of course, taken advantage of these improvements.

Q. How do you get to them? Do you read books or how?

A. I am a subscriber for two or three magazines—"Moving Pictures," "The Bioscope," etc.

Q. When you first began to produce on what scale did you start producing? I think you said just now that you were now producing at the rate of one picture a month? When you began, on what scale did you start?

A. Only two in a year. Of course, at that time I had to train everybody. I had to train all my assistants. Therefore I produced only two pictures in a year.

Q. When you began, how many theatres were there in India? Do you remember?

A. On my list there are 40 theatres.

Q. How many have you on your lists now?

A. More than 200.

Q. Has the problem of marketing your productions become easier?

A. It is easier.

Q. The growth in competition has not affected you?

A. No.

Q. Your firm's headquarters is Nasik?

A. We have our studios at Nasik and the office is at Bombay.

Q. How many producers are there in Nasik?

A. Only one and that is myself.

Q. Why did you go to Nasik?

A. Because the climate there is most suited to photography; there are oriental jungles, historical places and rivers.

Q. What about electric lights?

A. I make them myself. I have got two engines and two dynamos.

Q. Could you produce enough electricity for arc lights?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you ever use arc lights?

A. Yes.

Mr. Green: For taking photos with the camera?

A. No.

Mr. Coatsman: That is the point that I wanted to get. Could you produce enough electricity if you want?

A. No. We have only a machine of 5 h.p. and another of 12 h.p. To produce enough electricity for this purpose requires machines of 30 to 40 h.p. at least.

Q. Have you ever shown any of your films in Delhi?

A. Yes, I think so.

Chairman: I saw one in Bombay. "Sudam" was the name of it.

A. That was a Hindustan production.

Q. You say the capital of your firm is three lakhs?

A. Yes.

Q. May I ask what capital you started with?

A. 15,000.

Q. And how has the capital grown to three lakhs?

A. I had to ask my friends.

Q. Yes. That is what I mean. Formerly, it was a company and now it is a partnership business?

A. Yes.

Q. How many partners are there now?

A. Five.

Q. In the course of your existence as a film producing company, have you amalgamated with any other company?

A. No.

Q. Have you ever made any proposals for amalgamating?

A. Yes. But nobody would hear of them.

Q. Why not?

A. I don't know. I asked Mr. Patankar(?) who is working at Bombay. I also asked Mr. Baboo Rao from Kolhapur. But they would not amalgamate.

Q. Do you think it would be a good thing if a number of the present film producing companies were amalgamated?

A. Yes.

Q. What are the advantages that would follow the adoption of such a course?

A. There will be more than sufficient capital with them. Then there will be amalgamation of different ideas, different actors, etc. I may have two or three first class actors and another man may similarly have a few. If all are amalgamated, we shall have a dozen or so first class actors, actresses, etc.

Q. Can you say what stands in the way of amalgamation?

A. I cannot say. But nobody would join me. I tried my best. And at that time there were only 4 or 5 manufacturers in India.

Q. You were telling us about a show of one or two of your films in London. Who showed it?

A. The proprietor of "The Bioscope", Mr. Williamson.

Q. Was it a private show?

A. Yes.

Q. How many people were present?

A. About 20 or 25.

Q. Who were they?

A. There were certain theatre proprietors and some experts.

Q. Did anybody make you an offer?

A. Yes.

Q. What sort of offers?

A. They liked to have certain agencies but I was not prepared to provide them with films owing to the insufficiency of capital.

Q. What I mean is, regarding these films which you actually showed, did any theatre come forward to say "I would show that film"?

A. Yes. But I was not prepared. I had only one copy. I told them that I would explain to them everything after I came to India. But after coming to India the war began and there were a thousand and one difficulties for me to arrange anything.

Q. Have you made any efforts since to do that?

A. Now I am going to try that, especially in the case of my travelling films.

Q. Have you ever considered sending any topicals to England?

A. Yes. I have that idea too in my mind. I have not sent anything till now.

Q. In reply to Mr. Green you said that the project of an English company providing capital in this country to form a concern to produce films for outside markets was practicable?

A. Yes. It is practicable.

Q. Would you welcome such an attempt?

A. Of course, if I fail in my present project, then I will.

Q. I don't know if you noticed in the papers within the last few days about Mr. Woolfe of the British Instructional Film Co. coming out from England with capital and joining up with Indian actors and producers to produce first class films for the markets in England, America, Europe, and so on. Did you notice that?

A. I did not. But the idea is not bad. Yet there is one great drawback in it.

Q. What is it?

A. Indian customs and manners are quite different from European customs and manners. So also is the case in dress and everything else. The English company can only be the capitalist and they can supervise photography. They can do nothing else.

Q. I presume that is their idea?

A. That is a good idea.

Colonel Crawford: Have you generally found the film producing business a remunerative business?

A. It is a paying proposition from my point of view.

Q. How long is it going to be a paying proposition?

A. It will be a paying proposition permanently, if we produce first class films. If it is technically and artistically good it will be so. Otherwise it will fail.

Q. The production of first class films is a matter, I presume, of spending more money?

A. Yes, it is.

Q. What is the amount that one can spend on the production of one film with a reasonable hope of getting back an adequate return?

A. Not more than Rs. 25,000 per subject.

Q. Do you think you can produce a first class film on that amount?

A. Yes. After a time.

Q. You are therefore pinning your faith on the matter of expert technique and training?

A. Yes.

Q. It is not a question of having to use a good deal of money in payment to first class actors and actresses or improved scenes?

A. No. I don't think so. With a capital of Rs. 25,000 I can produce a first class film.

Q. You can get a profit also?

A. Yes.

Q. If you are going to spend a lakh on a film you would not get a profit?

A. No.

Q. What is the reason for that?

A. Because we have only the Indian market for our films.

Q. Therefore your point is that your present Indian market is too small?

A. Yes.

Q. What steps can we take to improve India's market?

A. If we produce certain films that will be appreciated in foreign countries and create a good market there, there is the possibility of getting more money on a film. I think people would like our films for the sake of

the novelty or for the sake of knowing India and the Indian character and also the romance.

Q. So an Indian producer can hope to get more money on an Indian film if he can secure a market outside India?

A. Yes. I quite agree.

Q. What about developing the Indian market?

A. There is a sufficient market for Indian films on the small scale.

Q. If you continue on that small scale, will not the people in course of time get fed up? Will it be popular for a long time? For example, the Western serials were very popular. But now I understand to-day the popularity is waning.

A. Yes. They are waning in popularity.

Q. That shows the public taste is capricious?

A. Yes.

Q. So if you continue to make only films of Rs. 25,000 value they would not be popular for a long time?

A. I think films of better quality can be produced with Rs. 25,000.

Q. Would you suggest any steps that we should take to increase the Indian market?

A. The difficulty in India is this: Excepting the mythological subjects, the others such as social or historical subjects, won't be appreciated by the people. For example, I am coming from the Bombay side. If I produce Shiyaji's life, it will never be appreciated in Bengal or Madras; or if I produce any social film, it will not be appreciated anywhere except in Bombay. That is the chief difficulty here.

Q. Then, from your point of view, we have only got a provincial market?

A. Only for mythological films we can have an all-India market; for other films, we will have only a provincial market.

Q. Do you think the people here have not got the theatre-going habit?

A. They have it.

Q. If they have such a habit, then it is only a question of providing more theatres for them to go to?

A. Yes, we do want more theatres. There are not enough theatres now, and people are trying their best to put up the capital for the purpose. We do want more theatres in India.

Q. Then you want to increase the 350 theatres we have already in India to about 1,000?

A. Yes.

Q. For what size of town do you want a theatre?

A. There should be one cinema for a population of, say, from 15,000 to 20,000.

Q. I think our experience is that there is about one cinema for every 50,000, and even then they do not get on well. Do you think really that for 20,000 people there should be a cinema?

A. Yes.

Q. How much money would you hope to get out of the 20,000?

A. There will be no loss at any rate.

Q. Do you think you can get Rs. 1,500 a month, with a population of only 20,000?

A. I don't think so. It will be something less.

Chairman: In that case, you will have to count on at least Rs. 50 a day?

A. Yes; but we have to pay at least Rs. 40 for a day for the film. Rs. 40 is the minimum charge.

Colonel Crawford: I am just trying to find out what you can get from a population of 20,000?

A. We can get about Rs. 1,000 a month, and I think that will be the highest figure. We must get 50 per cent. at least more, i.e., over what we pay.

Q. In that case, you will have to get Rs. 60 a day?

A. Yes.

Q. Then if you had 700 cinemas instead of 350, would you take Rs. 20 a day?

A. Yes, if we decrease the rates, it will be better. Only we will have to print more copies. That is all.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: Why not have open-air shows?

A. Yes, I prefer open-air shows. The G. I. P. Railway shows are all in open air and they are very popular.

Q. Do you think it is better to have more shows in the open air?

A. Yes, the people will like that.

Chairman: Then how would you regulate admission?

A. There must be some enclosure, of course.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: You said you were taking your son to England for six months?

A. Yes.

Q. Have you tried for any Government scholarship?

A. No.

Q. Do you think if Government gives some scholarship you can accept it, i.e., if they give it on the condition that your son comes back and trains others?

A. Yes, I think I can.

Q. Supposing there is no school for this particular purpose, do you think a class can be attached to some school in your Nasik college?

A. Yes, just as some music or drawing classes are attached to schools.

Q. Where are they attached?

A. In a good number of schools, drawing, athletic or music classes are attached and they are very popular. We can do the same thing here.

Q. You have sold your business to whom?

A. To the Hindustan Company.

Q. Can we go and see the whole thing there at Nasik?

A. Yes.

Q. Is systematic business going on still?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you think the Kolhapur business is better than the Nasik business?

A. Yes, except in photography.

Q. Is there any good producing company in Poona?

A. There are two, I think; the Aryan Film Company and the United Pictures Syndicate.

Q. If you send your son to other countries, don't you think there will be some trade jealousy or something like that?

A. I don't think so.

Q. They say there is a good deal of trade jealousy in America and England?

A. Yes, I have heard of such things, but my experience, when I was in England, was quite different. I had no difficulty at all. I have visited several studios myself.

Q. If other parents send their sons along with your son, would you take them?

A. Oh, yes; I am quite prepared to take them.

Q. You said you wanted some stricter censorship?

A. Yes.

Q. What do you think of the Bombay Board of Censors? Do you think they should be a better constituted body?

A. Yes.

Q. What do you suggest for that?

A. We must have a board knowing something of the inside of the cinema industry.

Q. You don't like an inspector going and seeing the films, etc.?

A. No.

Q. You think the board members ought to go and see them themselves?

A. Yes.

Q. That is why you think there is a good deal of laxity in passing the films?

A. Yes, I think so.

Q. You think the Government ought to help this industry?

A. Yes, I think they ought to.

Q. In what way?

A. That is the difficulty; I think they can give loans under certain conditions.

Q. They can also adopt some protective measures?

A. Yes; also cancel duties or reduce them.

Q. What guarantee do you think the Government can get from the business if they advanced money?

A. I cannot tell you that just now.

Q. Are there enough materials, worth two or three lakhs, which the business can mortgage?

A. Yes.

Q. Would you mortgage your materials?

A. That is of course another thing. I have left the concern. It rests now with the Hindustan Company to do that.

Q. You got a good remuneration, I suppose?

A. I have retired, being disgusted with it.

Q. Disgusted with what?

A. I do not care so much for money. I care more for technicality and first class production. I could not succeed and so I left it off.

Q. Suppose some other company wants you; will you join that?

A. No. I want some educational line.

Q. Suppose others join you in that idea: do you think you can take them with you?

A. Yes, I will.

Q. You have seen the Cinematograph Act passed in England?

A. No, I have not seen it.

Q. What do you think of the quota system? Do you know anything about it?

A. I know nothing about it.

Q. Do you think Government should levy any new tax for getting money, say, like the entertainment tax?

A. That is not required, I think.

Q. There is that tax already in Bombay; do you know that?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you think it is a handicap?

- A. Yes.
- Q. Then it ought to be removed?
- A. Yes.
- Q. Then where is the money to come from, for helping this industry?
- A. I think Government must help us in one way or another. The tax must be removed and Government must find money from some other source.
- Q. Where do you get your films from?
- A. From America and Germany.
- Q. You have to pay good duty, I suppose?
- A. Yes.
- Q. Do you want that to be removed?
- A. It should be lessened at least.
- Q. Is there any other kind of duty you want to be taken away or reduced?
- A. Duty on chemicals and raw films may be reduced.
- Q. Have you seen the posters and advertisements?
- A. Yes.
- Q. Do you think there is any harm in them: should they be censored?
- A. Only the embracing or love scenes and kissing scenes should be censored, I think.
- Q. Should there be any children's performances separately?
- A. Yes.
- Q. You think the films are injurious to the children?
- A. Only certain films, not all.
- Q. Should boys and girls under ten be prohibited from seeing these films?
- A. Yes, in the case of certain films.
- Q. But there are only a few people coming for these educational films; if we prohibit the boys or girls under ten from attending these films, there will be still fewer people then?
- A. No. It is only in the case of the love scenes or kissing films that we should put some restriction. It is not necessary in the case of the other films.
- Q. You were talking about historical films. Do you know anything about the "Razia Begum" film? Do you know by whom it was produced?
- A. By the Majestic Film Co.
- Q. Not by you?
- A. No.
- Q. Would there be any danger in filming the battle of Panipat?
- A. I don't think there would be any harm in that.
- Q. The Mahrattas were defeated there, and so they won't like that?
- A. Yes; but sometimes the Mahrattas will be defeated and sometimes the Muhammadans. But in the case of the battle of Panipat of course the Mahrattas will not like that.
- Q. So there is some danger in producing such films?
- A. I don't think so. Practically, there is no danger. There may be some sentimental objection.
- Q. Do you think they will insist on stopping that film?
- A. I don't think so. They will see the film and simply go away saying it is not good.
- Q. Do you think it would be better to censor the scenarios and stories in order to avoid some people objecting to one kind of films or another?
- A. That is not desirable. The film should be examined by the Board. That is all.

Q. But it will be difficult for the producer to produce it, then to have it rejected?

A. The producer must take that responsibility.

Colonel Crawford: Talking of finance, you said that the Government should come forward with help. Do you think that that is the best method of financing the industry?

A. I think so.

Q. Don't you prefer the method employed in Western countries where you make arrangements with the exhibitor to take your film on certain conditions, even before you produce it?

A. I have never thought over the question.

Q. Possibly you think that the method adopted in the West might be equally applicable to India?

A. I do not know.

Q. The method employed in the West is this: the producer and the exhibitor come to an agreement and the producer gets the money even before he produces the film?

A. That should not be the case; I don't like that.

Chairman: You think it is not practicable here?

A. No.

Colonel Crawford: Just another point. You referred to the fact that kissing scenes should be cut out. Will the pictures be popular if such scenes are cut out?

A. There will be other scenes in the pictures which will be popular.

Q. But if you show on the screen anything which is peculiar, the man in the street will say "trash; we don't do that"?

A. I myself will have no objection to such scenes. I am used to foreign people and their customs. I therefore see nothing in this kissing; but when children and adolescents see such scenes, they will get a bad impression.

Q. I do not suggest that you should make an Indian love scene in the Western method; it may be true to Indian love-making?

A. Yes. We never kiss in public; we do it in private, and people will never like that to be depicted on the screen.

Q. That is the point I want to get at. You don't like the kissing to be done on the screen. We know that in private rooms people do certain things and if you don't show the same things on the screen, what will the people say? They will be tired of it, and they will say they are not true to life?

A. No, I don't think so.

Oral Evidence of Mr. M. FAIYAZ KHAN, F.R.G.S., F.Z.S., ex-Member of the Legislative Assembly, on Monday, the 13th February 1928.

Chairman: You are a Zamindar and you were a member of the first Assembly?

A. Yes, your colleague as well.

Q. I am proud of that. You have travelled in the West?

A. Yes, a great deal.

Q. You have been to Los Angeles?

A. Yes.

Q. When was that?

A. Between 1919 and 1920.

- Q. How long did you stay there?
 A. For a few years, in Europe, and America, New York—not in Los Angeles.
- Q. You were taking an interest in the film industry?
 A. Yes.
- Q. What was your object?
 A. A friend of mine advised me to go in for it; and just for the sake of fun, I went there.
- Q. Did you go to the studios there?
 A. Yes, to almost all.
- Q. Did you find any difficulty in getting admission?
 A. No. I had many friends there.
- Q. You saw the work in the studios?
 A. Yes.
- Q. Have you seen Indian films?
 A. I have seen very few.
- Q. Are there any shows in Agra?
 A. I do not take much interest in seeing the films on the screen.
- Q. But you were taking an interest in the studios?
 A. Yes, I used to take an interest.
- Q. I suppose you went to America with a view to go in for this industry?
 A. I went there for business training. I reached America a bit early and I could not get admission immediately. So I had to spend some six months, during which period a friend of mine advised me to go in for this industry. I did so.
- Q. With what object?
 A. First of all, I took a course in a well-known institute of photography in New York and after having taken a diploma, I got introductions to a good many friends, and I was always welcome there.
- Q. So you had an idea of going in for this industry?
 A. Not exactly. I was only interested in it.
- Q. Did you try it at all after coming here?
 A. I could not interest people to go in for this. It required a lot of capital and moreover I had no other person to help me in this matter. So I dropped it.
- Q. You could not get people to finance you?
 A. Mostly so; they did not care to take much interest in this industry.
- Q. There is no production at all in the United Provinces?
 A. Not that I know of.
- Q. What are the difficulties in the way of production?
 A. I think lack of experts.
- Q. In what line?
 A. Generally production requires a lot of help from experts who know the business.
- Q. You mean in photography?
 A. Yes; in all the technicalities—photography, studio, direction, etc.
- Q. What do you suggest should be done to encourage the Indian film industry? Do you think Government should do anything?
 A. I think so.
- Q. What is it that they should do?
 A. They ought to invite some concerns to start business in India.
- Q. You mean they should invite foreign concerns to come here and start business?

- A. Yes.
- Q. Guaranteeing anything?
 A. The Government should purchase 50 per cent. of the shares and for five or ten years at least they ought to increase the duty on foreign films in order to encourage the Indian industry.
- Q. As a sort of protection against foreign competition?
 A. Yes.
- Q. You think the foreign films manufactured abroad are competing with Indian films?
 A. I do not think Indian films can compete with foreign films; at any rate, not at present.
- Q. But you wanted to increase the duty?
 A. Yes, of course. The higher the price, the lesser the chance of competition from outside.
- Q. You think that will increase the growth of the Indian industry?
 A. Absolutely. I am convinced of it.
- Q. But why should Government take any measures? Why not the private concerns?
 A. After a few years Government ought to sell their shares to Indians. I know for certain from some of the Japanese students in New York that their Government did exactly the same thing. They invited some of the American concerns to start business in Japan and they were asked to train the Japanese, and the duty was also raised. In a couple of years, the people who were trained became experts and the duty was again reduced. Now the Japanese films are well off.
- Q. You think Government should encourage the starting of studios here by themselves financing them?
 A. At least 50 per cent. of the shares ought to be purchased by the Government.
- Q. Then when the concern is a success, it should be handed over to private agencies?
 A. Yes, to private agencies or to the shareholders, as the case may be.
- Sir Haroon Jaffer: 50 per cent. foreign capital?
 A. Yes, 50 per cent. foreign capital and 50 per cent. to be purchased by Government.
- Chairman: And the concerns will get their own experts?
 A. Yes.
- Q. Why should you have such a thing?
 A. I think it will be better if three or four people are sent to England and America to approach some concerns, and they will be quite willing to start business in India. I am quite positive because I have been corresponding on the subject with a few of my friends. Most of them welcome this suggestion. Mere writing would not do.
- Q. Should Government do it or the private citizens?
 A. I think the Government should do it. It is exactly the Japanese programme that I am advocating. The Government began it in the beginning and later many Japanese invested their money in the film trade.
- Mr. Green: When did they invest their money?
 A. Of course not in the beginning. It was done only after some years.
- Chairman: In order to show to people and convince them?
 A. Yes.
- Q. Do you think money would be lost or could it be recovered?
 A. I think it will be a profitable business. In the beginning people might not take interest.

Q. You think this company of yours could produce films which will be acceptable to the American audience?

A. Not in the beginning; but in the long run it is sure to be acceptable to the foreign as well as the Indian market.

Q. Supposing, in this company of yours, experts came and produced Indian films. Do you think they could produce films which will be acceptable in America or Europe?

A. Most certainly, and they will have to train Indians for a couple of years too.

Q. After a certain time, they will have commercial value outside India?

A. I think so.

Q. Do you think the American public will care to see films dealing with Indian subjects if they are well produced.

A. I think so. "The Light of Asia" was very popular. I had a letter from a friend of mine from New York. He had seen it in England.

Q. Was it shown in America?

A. I don't know whether it was shown in America or not.

Q. Are Indian films shown in Agra?

A. Almost everyday.

Q. How many cinemas are there in Agra?

A. Three.

Q. What is the population?

A. It is about a lakh and ninety thousand.

Q. All the three cinemas are paying?

A. Yes; I think well.

Q. They do not show the Indian films in all the three I think, e.g., in the Cantonment area they do not show Indian films at all.

A. Yes, only in the other two they are showing one or two Indian films every day. But they were not good ones from what I saw.

Q. What about scholarships? Do you want students to go abroad or do you think Government should help in getting experts to India and training the students and that sort of thing?

A. I think experts should be imported and these studios should have them. Abroad all the studios might not take in Indians.

Q. But then to get first class experts it would be costly?

A. Of course if you want to do business, cost should not matter much.

Q. You think the Indian students would not have opportunities to learn in America?

A. My experience is dark Indians have absolutely no opportunities there.

Q. Those who might be taken for negroes have no chance?

A. No. I am afraid people of your complexion will have no opportunity. But I had no difficulty and I know South Indians had great difficulties even in moving about.

Q. You think people of my complexion would not be admitted?

A. No. No decent hotel will admit you, Sir.

Q. What I want to know is whether Indian students who go there will have facilities for learning.

A. If they are fair they will get better facilities. I was most of the time taken for a Spaniard or South American and even for an Indian but never for a negro. I had not the least trouble.

Q. Apart from that, what do you want Government to do in the matter?

A. The suggestion I have already made is the most useful, i.e., that you ought to have a company in which Government should take shares.

Q. In the Company that you suggest would you insist that there should be so many Indian directors?

A. Yes, we must have that. Also 50 per cent. of the shares should be sold only to Indians. Unless the Government purchase such shares, foreigners should purchase all the shares. These shares should be in Indian hands.

Q. First of all the Government should sell these shares in the market to Indians?

A. Yes.

Q. Would one company do for that?

A. I think you may have a good many. If you invite them, merely writing invitation letters would not carry much weight. The Government of India should send a sort of a deputation to England and America to encourage people to come forward on these terms. The terms alone are not very important. This is exactly what the Japanese told me they did to encourage their trade.

Q. Do you want Government to produce educational films?

A. I have not seen any Government doing that.

Q. Are they not doing this in America?

A. No. After all they might make a few. The Columbia University does it.

Q. You do not go to the cinema much?

A. Not everyday but once in a way I go. I prefer it to the theatres.

Q. I suppose the cinema habit is increasing?

A. It ought to

Q. What effect has the cinema on the population?

A. I think it has no effect at all, either good or bad. People go there just for fun.

Q. But surely when they see conditions in other countries, how people go there to big houses, how trams run, how motor cars are regulated, don't you think it broadens their outlook?

A. I don't think it does. It is after all only for a few minutes and people do not remember them.

Q. Therefore you think the pictures shown are all right?

A. Some of them are not good. The pictures shown in Agra are not very good.

Q. So far as you have seen the films, do you consider their moral tone is all right?

A. It is neither all right nor all wrong.

Q. You do not think that the censorship is not adequate.

A. I do not know anything about censorship. All those films that are exhibited have been passed by the censors I think.

Q. You think there is nothing objectionable?

A. I have not seen any objectionable films. If they are objectionable they cannot be put on the screen.

Q. Is there any demoralising effect upon the people caused by the western films?

A. There are hundreds of western films and I do not think people take them seriously.

Q. That is your point?

A. Yes. I think it is better than the theatres. Some of the theatres are more demoralising than the films.

Q. Western theatres or Eastern theatres?

A. The theatres that I have seen in Agra. I think the Bengalee theatres are good, where they put on some of the plays written by Rabindranath Tagore.

Q. Have you seen the questionnaire?

A. I have just seen it, here and there.

Q. Have you any suggestions to make?

A. I think what you want really is that you should encourage people to take interest in this business. I think the only way is to follow the example of Japan.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: You were a member of the Assembly?

A. I was.

Q. You are taking interest in the matter in your province? Why has not your Government taken interest in the matter?

A. That is for the Government to answer.

Q. Did you take any steps to induce Government in this direction?

A. No, not as a member of the Assembly. The business is now in its infancy.

Q. Do you advocate advisory boards of Government in order to encourage the industry?

A. No.

Q. You want American experts to be imported in order to advance the industry?

A. Yes; I know experts from America have been invited by England, by the Pathé people, by German concerns also.

Q. Besides experts, you do not want any advisory committee?

A. No.

Q. Have you producing companies in the United Provinces?

A. I do not know of any.

Q. Do you know of affairs in other provinces?

A. No, I know only about Delhi.

Q. You know that 90 per cent. of the economic wealth of India is in American hands?

A. Why, for the matter of that even 90 per cent. of the wealth of the other parts of the world is in American hands.

Q. You still desire that 50 per cent. of the capital should go to outsiders?

A. That cannot be helped, in the beginning.

Q. You have suggested that half of the capital should be sold to foreigners?

A. That is only in the beginning, i.e., until, Indians take sufficient interest.

Q. How would this foreign capital go away?

A. This would go away as more and more Indian capitalists come in.

Q. But you have restricted it to 50 per cent.?

A. Yes; it is only in the initial stages.

Q. Then this concern should be like an experiment?

A. No, just as any other business concern.

Q. So that it might give encouragement to Indian industry?

A. My point is: whosoever invests money, he is not a fool. He would expect a good return for his money.

Q. Have you seen in America, Indians filmed in shady colours?

A. Yes. In Chicago and Salt Lake City some of the Padres and Missionaries did it who had just returned from India. Not only that, I had some quarrel with one of the Padres who was talking all sorts of nonsense.

Q. You have seen only two, there may be many more?

A. Most certainly there must be more because I could not have covered all America. There are many films where the Pathans and Moors are shown in bad colours.

Q. Did you raise any objection?

A. Not I, personally, but many of my friends went in a sort of deputation to the Company and they, I believe, removed the pictures.

Q. So you think these things ought to be stopped, stopped by a Board of Censors?

A. Absolutely.

Q. Are Muhammadans prohibited from producing films?

A. Religiously they are. Religiously any kind of photography or making of pictures is prohibited.

Q. So Mussalmans are prohibited from taking any photographs?

A. Yes, but they are doing it all the same?

Chairman (to Sir Haroon Jaffer): Just as you have your photo taken.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: So no Muhammadan will keep with him the figure on the rupee.

A. I am not prepared to discuss that.

Q. It has been suggested to us by some witness. There is no question of any discussion of a religious kind?

A. I am prepared even for that.

Q. Educational films, they also ought to be encouraged?

A. I do not think the general public take much interest in such films. They do not go there for the sake of study.

Q. Cholera films. If they are shown the prevention of Cholera will not the people be affected thereby?

A. I don't think they will be, much interested and, after all, you are not going to show them for any length of time. In my opinion they won't have any effect at all.

Q. There is cotton cultivation, wheat cultivation, sugarcane growing, poultry farming. If these are shown on the film will not the people appreciate them?

A. Illiterate people are not going to be affected thereby at all. That is my experience.

Colonel Crawford: Where do you actually reside?

A. In Agra city.

Q. Not in the district?

A. No.

Q. You are a Zamindar. Do you own lands outside also?

A. Not in Agra district. But I own lands in Aligarh and Bulandshahr.

Q. Do you think the cinema is getting more popular as a whole?

A. Absolutely.

Q. Even in your own community?

A. Yes.

Q. How many cinemas are there in Agra?

A. Three.

Q. Do you think travelling cinemas are not used?

A. Well, I have not much experience. Once when you go to the village with the cinema for the sake of fun they may enjoy it.

Q. They pay for it and go to see it?

A. If the charge is not high.

Q. In the beginning the producers should give free shows?

A. No.

Q. Then make a charge straightaway?

A. Yes, just a nominal charge.

Q. About two annas?

A. 2 annas to 4 annas, but not everyday. They will get disgusted. If shown once a fortnight they will be interested to see it.

Mr. Coatman: When you were talking about foreign capital coming in to finance the producing concerns in this country, you said Government should take 50 per cent. of the shares.

A. Yes, that is my suggestion and they must have half the number of Indian Directors.

Q. Don't you think that if Government did take up 50 per cent. of the shares it might lead to very undesirable influences being brought to bear upon Government?

A. In what way?

Q. I will give you an example. Suppose this producing company is, for one reason or another, not doing well. Then the Directors come and say "we are going to lose the money and get into trouble unless the Government will do something to help our company either by giving more money or passing an act imposing additional duty on others". Don't you think some such thing will happen?

A. In the beginning there must be excess duty on some of the firms.

Q. Supposing your suggestion is accepted and even then a company fails?

A. You cannot guarantee failure or non-failure of any business. Business after all is a sort of speculation.

Q. Where it fails, don't you think the foreign capitalists would try to bring influence upon the Government to get more money? Don't you think that that is a possibility?

A. I don't think so. I want the thing to be started just as they started it in Japan, 50 per cent. Japan capital, 50 per cent. foreign. When people begin to interest themselves they will start other companies and eventually the foreign capital would go. The Japanese concerns have all been successful.

Q. Would you say that the development of the film industry is a vital necessity, so that Government should come in?

A. The same question could be put about every concern. There are certain industries which the Government should protect, for example, the steel industry in which the Government has put in more money. Every industry must be encouraged, whatever it may be, big or small.

Q. Don't you think that the example of the steel industry is not altogether encouraging?

A. I don't know. There are some politics in it, the affairs of the Tata industry. I am not prepared to discuss it because I don't know. It was supposed that Government were not pleased to protect Indian industry as against Sheffield.

Q. You admit that Government is helping very generously?

A. I don't know anything of the interior affairs.

Q. The point I want to get at is this. There are many calls on the purse of the Government of India. There are very many pressing demands for money and so they cannot afford to spend more money on cinemas.

A. So far as I am concerned that is the wisest way of encouraging the film industry. It is the only way which has been adopted by other Governments. I don't know why the Indian Government should not do likewise. Japan was a backward country. It adopted the policy I have already mentioned and it has come out splendidly well.

Q. How did the Japanese Government do it?

A. They invited American concerns to put in their money and the Government themselves took 50 per cent. of the shares.

Mr. Neogy: You know that a European concern has come out to India and is engaged in the production of Indian films at Agra?

A. I heard the other day that there was some such concern.

Q. Have you met anybody representing that concern at Agra?

A. No.

Q. Supposing a foreign concern like that should come out to India and take pictures, would you impose any restrictions on their activities?

A. Pictures of what?

Q. Pictures relating to India?

A. I don't know why they should come over here to do that. They could as well produce their pictures in England, America and other places.

Q. Supposing they misrepresent Indian life?

A. Then you ought to stop it.

Q. How to stop that being done?

A. That is the difficulty.

Q. Supposing a foreign company with a big capital were to come to India to produce pictures here, then would you insist on that concern permitting Indians to subscribe to its capital?

A. Well, if Indians could subscribe to that. If a concern is started to-day, 50 per cent. of the capital should be reserved for public subscription in India, and if the public fell short of this in subscribing, then Government should take up the balance.

Q. You were thinking of the case of a company floated in India by the Government in India or through non-official agency. But supposing a concern comes out to India from America or Germany with a big capital and begins to produce pictures in India, will you impose restrictions on them?

A. Yes, I will. They ought to train Indians in the film industry. I would insist upon that condition.

Q. Would you insist upon having Indian capital in the concern?

A. If possible, yes.

Q. But you would like to have Indians sharing the capital, I presume?

A. If they don't want it, then?

Q. You would give them the option?

A. I only insist upon Indians being trained.

Q. And you would insist upon having Indian Directors also, I suppose?

A. Well, if you begin training Indians then they can learn the business and afterwards they can become Directors themselves.

Q. I mean the Directors controlling the business side?

A. I think training is more important. When Indians become experts, by and by they might become Directors in other firms.

Oral Evidence of Mr. BADRI PRASAD MATHUR, M.A., T.Dip. (Lon.), Professor of English, Radha Swami Educational Institute, Agra, on Monday, the 13th February 1928.

Chairman: Where do you stay?

A. In Agra.

Q. Are you connected with any educational institution?

A. Yes, I belong to the staff of the College at Agra. I am a Lecturer in the college.

- Q. Do you go to the Cinema often?
- A. I used to go very often while I was in the College about 5 years ago, but since then I have been going only off and on.
- Q. And now have you been taking interest in the films?
- A. Yes, in a way.
- Q. In what way?
- A. I take interest, particularly, in films that have an educative value. I even take out my students with me for such shows.
- Q. Have you travelled abroad?
- A. Yes, I studied at the London University. Then I attended the Educational Conference in Yugo Slavia.
- Q. You have seen cinemas in those places, I suppose?
- A. Yes, some of them.
- Q. And you have seen Indian films in Agra too?
- A. Yes, I have seen a good number of them.
- Q. Were they all Bombay films?
- A. Most of them were Bombay films and some were from Calcutta, I believe.
- Q. Do you like them?
- A. Yes, they do appeal to me. The sentiments expressed behind those films are much appreciated by me but the technique is not quite good.
- Q. Are these Indian films popular with Indians?
- A. Yes, particularly with those who are religiously minded. To the average educated Indian they appeal most. Those who are interested in the Hindu mythology take their ladies also to these pictures.
- Q. Generally Indian ladies don't go to the western pictures, I suppose?
- A. Not as a rule, unless the family happens to be Anglicised or modernised.
- Q. Do Indian ladies go to Indian films?
- A. Yes they do.
- Q. Do the Indian films appeal to the Indian students?
- A. They do appeal to the Indian students also if the photography is good, but if they find that it is not very well done, then they won't go.
- Q. You mean students prefer Western films?
- A. I would not say that, but Indian students would readily go to Indian pictures also if they are good pictures.
- Q. What is the condition of the Indian films in that respect?
- A. I think the student community will say that Indian films are not very well executed but the idea behind the films is very much better.
- Q. Are they popular with the students?
- A. Yes they are, generally.
- Q. Although the technique is poor?
- A. Yes.
- Q. And does the Anglicised Indian care for the Indian films?
- A. Of the two, I think, he will be inclined to go to the Western.
- Q. And do all the three cinemas in Agra show Indian pictures?
- A. I was talking to the manager of one of the three cinemas there. He told me that since Indian pictures were not a success at his theatre he has given up the idea of showing Indian pictures there.
- Q. Where is that cinema situated, is it in the Cantonment?
- A. No, near the city.
- Q. Where are the other two situated?

- A. One is close by and the other is in the Cantonment. The man who told me that he has abandoned the idea of showing Indian films happened to be a Mohammedan and generally only Mohammadans used to go to his theatre. In the other picture palace which is generally frequented by Hindus, Indian pictures are mostly shown.
- Q. You say that because his clientele happened to be mostly Mohammadans, Indian films were not a success there?
- A. Yes.
- Q. Do you think that Mohammadans don't attend Indian films?
- A. Educated Mohammadans may go to Indian films, but since most of the Indian films have a Hindu background they appeal more, I think, to the Hindus.
- Q. What is the lowest charge in Agra?
- A. That depends upon the picture house. The lowest rate in one is, I think, about 2 annas, in another 4 annas and in the picture house in the cantonment I think the lowest is about 8 annas. I am not quite sure about these figures.
- Q. You see Western films very often?
- A. Yes, I do.
- Q. Do you go to all the theatres or only to one particular theatre?
- A. I do not make any rigid distinction between them. I go to any theatre which shows good films.
- Q. And you judge them beforehand by the description given about them?
- A. Yes.
- Q. And therefore you don't see any bad films at all?
- A. I have seen some bad films in my college days.
- Q. What is a bad film according to you?
- A. To my mind a bad film is really one which stimulates the latent sexual feelings of the young men. That according to my mind is the worst film.
- Q. Have you seen many such pictures?
- A. I have seen a few.
- Q. And that was five years ago, I presume?
- A. In England I saw several of them.
- Q. Have you seen such pictures in Agra?
- A. During the last two or three years I have not seen very many films of that sort in India.
- Q. So you have no objection to the films you have seen here?
- A. Some of them I would really object to.
- Q. What were they like?
- A. I mean these love romances.
- Q. You don't want them at all?
- A. I don't want the student community at least, to see such films.
- Q. What about novels? Do they not read novels?
- A. We don't keep such novels in our College library nor are they available for the students there.
- Q. Do you object to the love romances altogether?
- A. I object to cheap love romances which are not the creations of good novelists.
- Q. Similarly you would object to such films also I suppose?
- A. As far as possible I would like the students to eschew the negative side of morals.
- Q. You yourself see such pictures?
- A. Not as a rule.

- Q. Then why do you say there are such films?
 A. Because one reads the description of these films and the students who go to such films speak of them to their friends, etc.
- Q. Have you seen any objectionable picture yourself?
 A. During the last three or four years I have seen one objectionable film at Agra and that was an American picture. I got disgusted with that.
- Mr. Green: Can you tell us the name of that picture?
 A. No, I don't remember that.
- Chairman: What was it that you objected to?
 A. The love romance.
- Q. They may be healthy love romances? How do you say that it was a bad love romance?
 A. For instance, the woman trying to get at the attention of a young man and the young man falling in love with that young woman, and then the hugging and kissing on the screen, the duration of which was by no means very small. The ideal of the Indian teacher is to see that every boy is celibate in thought and deed and such pictures have naturally a disturbing effect upon young Indian minds.
- Q. I suppose in later life he comes in contact with the realities of life?
 A. I would call them the legitimate rights of man then. If he over-does those things then I would not class them so.
- Q. You mean by seeing these films, he over-does it?
 A. He feels it in his mind. At any rate, his mind is disturbed and he does not feel himself quite fit for study.
- Q. Are you speaking of College students?
 A. I am speaking of College, as well as Secondary school, students.
- Q. I suppose you would not like the College students to learn about morals?
 A. I wouldn't keep them in a glasscase as it were. I would like them to be familiar with the healthy side of morals and not the perverted ideas of sex love.
- Q. What is the perversion if a young man loves a young woman?
 A. If it is only pure love then there is no objection, but what we see in the pictures is perverted love carried to indecent limits. All these remarks refer only to Western films.
- Q. What is it you are afraid of?
 A. The indecency sometimes shown on the screen. Of course one does not see it very often.
- Q. You have seen only one such film during the last three years?
 A. Yes.
- Q. And that was a case of hugging and kissing to which you object?
 A. Yes, because students are not fit for serious work for sometime after. I would not say they become absolutely criminals and lose their morality.
- Q. Do you think these students think and talk about what they see in pictures?
 A. Yes, I think so.
- Q. Even after they go back to their own homes?
 A. Their minds become obsessed with it.
- Q. Have you known of any instance yourself? You need not mention names but can you tell us of any particular instance which you may have in mind? Can you tell us whether any young man was spoiled by seeing such pictures?
 A. In one particular case I could notice, in a student who was a habitual cinema goer, some marked change. He did not seem to me to be the same old intelligent boy.

- Q. Are there not other conditions in life which could create such a condition for the boy?
 A. I don't think so, the cinema is at the present time one of the most powerful agencies.
- Q. Are you not aware that in America out of a population of 100 millions more than 50 millions go to the cinema every week?
 A. Yes, that may be so, but in this particular case I found a distinct change in the temperament of the boy.
- Q. He got cinema-struck I suppose?
 A. Yes.
- Q. You think the Indian films are alright except for the technique and the photography. The morals are alright I suppose?
 A. Yes, I think so. So far as the moral side is concerned they are very good.
- Q. And except for the technique they are alright?
 A. Yes, I think so.
- Q. Would you allow the Indian films to take the place of Western films?
 A. Yes, to a larger extent.
- Q. You think more Indian films should be produced and shown in this country?
 A. Yes. That will be creating a good taste among students also.
- Q. Do you think that if Government opened a school to train students in photography, direction, acting, etc., students would be forthcoming in large numbers to study the technique of the art?
 A. I think students would be available.
- Q. Do you think students will come in large numbers?
 A. I think so.
- Mr. Green: Of both sexes?
 A. I can't say that. I have no ladies in my college and I don't think, generally, lady students would be forthcoming. In these parts it will be very difficult to get lady students to come in for the study of Cinematography, etc. In Allahabad, Agra and other parts there is a strict *purdah* system in vogue.
- Chairman: But in the Punjab they might come I suppose?
 A. They might, but I can't say.
- Q. Do you think the Cinema has got a good widening effect on people's outlook of the world?
 A. Western films, if they are good, have really a good educative value.
- Q. I don't understand your "if". I want your impression about it?
 A. We see good, bad and indifferent films.
- Q. What about the films which you have seen in Agra? Have they any educative value, broadly speaking?
 A. I should think they have, particularly if they are films shewing adventures, sporting events, topical subjects, etc.
- Q. Which in your opinion is greater, the educative value or the possible evil effect which the films have?
 A. My opinion is that the possibility of danger is more than the possibility of doing good.
- Q. And for that you are able to cite only one instance?
 A. Yes, of an indecent film.
- Q. You mean the evil to the student community?
 A. Yes, from the Western films.
- Q. You think hugging and kissing is indecent?
 A. It is no doubt indecent to the Indian mind.

Q. I suppose it is not indecent to the Western mind. You know the Western methods of living.

A. I don't think they will consider it indecent, but even in England nobody kisses in public.

Q. I suppose they do it in parks and other places?

A. Yes, in secluded places, they sometimes do so. The courtship, for instance, if it is not done without proper restraint might have a bad effect on the minds of young men.

Q. You object to the Western life being shown here. Is it on the screen or the stage or both? Take the stage for instance. Do the European theatrical troupes visit Agra?

A. Very rarely.

Q. Do you allow your students to see these professional theatrical troupes which go about?

A. I don't think there is anything objectionable in them, at any rate I don't think I have come across any to which I should take serious objections.

Q. You don't mind the students seeing them?

A. No, I don't mind.

Q. Then what is it that you object to, except the hugging and kissing?

A. I believe there is too much of the sex element shown on the screen. It is all over-done. That is my opinion.

Q. But don't you think there should be some over-doing to make it interesting?

A. Yes, I agree.

Q. So, you are of opinion that such scenes should be eliminated from these pictures?

A. Yes, scenes in which sex or crime predominates.

Q. Supposing after a time they cease to be attractive, would you advocate the closing of the cinemas altogether?

A. I don't think it could ever be carried out to that extent.

Q. Is the evil, you think, of so serious as to call for any action now?

A. I think so. I would advocate a little more strict censorship.

Q. But you have seen such films in England?

A. Yes.

Q. It has no effect there, I suppose?

A. The educationists even there don't permit school-going children to go to these films. They arrange special matinees for them.

Q. What is it you advocate then? Do you think adults here could see such pictures without injury to themselves?

A. It is equally objectionable to adults but it may not do them so much harm.

Q. Then will you classify these films, "for adults", "for children", etc.?

A. To my mind it seems impracticable. I myself have seen in London, several boys coming out of a theatre where a film which was labelled to be shown exclusively for adults, was shown.

Q. Your view is there should be stricter censorship in love matters?

A. Yes, exactly.

Q. And for the encouragement of the Indian film industry you want Government to institute scholarships to enable our young men to go abroad and study the technique of the art?

A. Yes.

Q. So, according to you, by going to England and seeing these pictures, he might get spoiled?

A. By mere going to England a man cannot get spoiled. If that be the case I would not have gone there myself.

Q. So, you think it will be beneficial?

A. Certainly, it will be. It will be a great asset to the man undoubtedly.

Q. But you see, even according to you, the European and Indian methods are quite different. The dress, acting, etc., are quite different?

A. I don't think there will be much difficulty on that account. A man after having received his training is free to adopt his methods to local needs.

Q. You are to select your students?

A. Yes. We have to make a very careful selection. I met a Bengalee gentleman in Rome. He had been there for the last 1½ years. He is a very clever and intelligent man and he has also picked up acting.

Q. What is he doing now?

A. He is still in Rome in that line. He is acting there. He went there for the purpose of specialising in photography. He is coming back.

Q. When did you meet him?

A. I met him about 2 years ago. I don't know what happened to him after that.

Q. You think the cinema is useful in supplementing education?

A. Yes.

Q. You think educational films ought to be produced?

A. Yes. That is the prime need of educationists in India.

Q. It is useful for mass education also?

A. Yes. The Government ought to produce them. Films of Shakespearean plays for example might be shown to the University students with great profit.

Q. Would you advocate a Government studio for that purpose?

A. Even if it is not a Government studio the Government might help in that direction by giving a subsidy and controlling the management. They might give a grant-in-aid. They might do whichever is more feasible.

Mr. Green. I have got only one question. You are anxious about the effect of the cinema scenes on the young girls or adolescents. Do I understand you to say that it will be bad both in England and in India?

A. It is bad specially in India. In England also it should be harmful but not equally. I mean to say that it might, for instance, pollute the minds of those people who do not come from good families.

Q. Why should they have more effect in India?

A. Because the Indian outlook, the Indian ideals and the Indian way of marriage, etc., are quite different. I mean to say that it is due to the difference in customs.

Colonel Crawford: Do you yourself go often to the western films?

A. You mean here in India?

Q. Yes.

A. I have stopped going to the cinemas lately.

Q. My point is do you prefer to see the western films on the whole?

A. When I used to go to cinemas there were not very many Indian films. Whenever there were Indian films I would rather go to the Indian films. Western films are, of course, better.

Q. Is it purely a question of photography or is it a question of producing the story itself?

A. It never gave me joy to see a bad Indian film. That is why I did not go very often.

Q. Do you consider that the method of producing a story in an Indian film is not sufficiently dramatic?

A. I think they are rather slow in movement. I would say that just as average Indian plays cannot satisfy a student of drama, I mean one who studies dramatic literature very much, in the same way a drama on the screen

can never satisfy him. It can never satisfy the taste of all people. We have never been artists in writing dramas. That is what I have stated in my reply. We have had no training so far in the dramatic art. We cannot write dramas and dramatic stories. To a student who has been reading English dramas of a high order they would not appeal. For my part I compare an Indian play with a play of Shakespeare or of Shaw. So I would not enjoy them at all.

Oral Evidence of Mr. P. L. ORDE, C.I.E., Senior Superintendent of Police, Delhi, on Tuesday, the 14th of February 1928.

Chairman: How long have you been Superintendent of Police here in Delhi?

A. Since November 1923.

Q. I suppose you are the head of the Police in this province?

A. Yes.

Q. How many cinemas are here?

A. There are 4 in Delhi city itself. There are three large ones and other small ones in various places.

Q. Where do they come from?

A. They come from all over India. They are travelling ones.

Q. Do any of these cinemas confine themselves only to Indian films?

A. No.

Q. All of them show both western and Indian films?

A. Yes. I think so. I never heard about any of these showing only Indian films.

Q. Or western films only?

A. I think so.

Q. Is there any police officer whose duty it is to see the cinemas?

A. A C. I. D. Officer is always present.

Q. Does he make any reports about them?

A. He only makes reports if there is anything objectionable.

Q. Have there been any reports of that sort at any time?

A. Yes.

Q. Does it happen often?

A. No. Very seldom. One particular thing I remember. There was a film in which Moses was shown.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: Perhaps "Moon of Isarel"?

A. Some objection was taken to it by a person in the audience.

Chairman: Did you see it yourself?

A. No.

Q. Was any action taken on that?

A. The proprietor was asked whether he would be willing to take off this film and he took it off.

Q. Who asked him?

A. A complainant was made by the complainant to the Chief Commissioner about this film. The proprietor himself expressed his willingness to take it off.

Q. Was he the only individual who objected to it?

A. It was actually a single individual but he was the Secretary of a Muhammadan Society.

Q. For how many days was it shown here before that?

A. It was shown only for one day.

Q. I suppose the Chief Commissioner too did not see the film?

A. I don't think so. In view of the fact that the proprietor was willing to take it off there was no need to see it.

Q. Do you know whether that film was shown anywhere?

A. I think it was shown in many places. The proprietor told us so.

Q. Was it shown in the U. P. for instance?

A. I cannot say exactly the Province.

Q. Who was the proprietor?

A. The Elphinstone Cinema.

Q. That was one occasion?

A. Yes.

Q. Are there any other occasions on which your officer found any objections?

A. There were one or two occasions on which the C. I. D. reported that exception might probably be taken but actually nothing happened. We took no action. Because there was no complaint from the public.

Q. What was the nature of the objections?

A. The objection was that Moses was depicted on the film.

Q. Was he a Mussalman Inspector?

A. Do you refer to the case in which the film was actually taken off?

Q. What was the other case where you said that your officer thought that exception might be taken?

A. I cannot exactly remember. But I think it had nothing to do with religion. It was a social matter.

Q. None of you saw that film?

A. I did not see it.

Q. I suppose you go to the cinema yourself?

A. I go occasionally. Not very often.

Q. With regard to the films you have seen, are you generally satisfied with the moral tone?

A. I think so.

Q. I suppose your experience as a police officer is both in Delhi and in the Punjab?

A. Yes.

Q. In your experience have you come across any case where any crime can be said to be due to the cinema?

A. I don't think so. That is a thing which I have been watching very carefully but I cannot trace any single instance where crime can be said to be due to the influence of the films.

Q. On the whole you think that the cinema is working for education?

A. I should rather say that it is more a form of relaxation than education.

Q. You think that among the people the cinema-going habit is growing?

A. I would say that. But whether there is any great increase I do not know.

Q. It is very popular?

A. Yes.

Q. Has the number of cinemas grown?

A. It remains stationary I should say. Now new cinema house has been opened.

Q. For your province Delhi is the only place where there is a cinema?

A. Yes. There are occasional travelling cinema shows but otherwise Delhi is the only place.

Q. Have you got a police training school here?
 A. No. Our men are trained at the Punjab Training School.
 Q. Do you think the film can be used to train the police people?
 A. In the matter of traffic control and various other things it could be made useful.
 Q. It is not made use of now I suppose?
 A. No.
 Q. Recently I saw at Calcutta a police officer from London News giving lessons on traffic control, etc. Do you know about it?
 A. No.
 Q. Do you see any Indian films at all?
 A. I have seen one. I cannot remember its name.
 Q. Was it "The Light of Asia"?
 A. Yes. It was liked very much both by the Europeans and Indians.
 Q. Do you think such films will be attractive outside India?
 A. I should say so undoubtedly. Any really wellstaged film on eastern subjects will be a great attraction.
 Q. Are you satisfied with the censorship as it is now?
 A. I think on the whole it is satisfactory. I think it will be very difficult to improve it.
 Mr. Green: I take it there may always be some difference of opinion on a particular incident in a particular film?
 A. Yes. That is unavoidable.
 Q. Regarding this question of films which might possibly affect religious feelings—I am not in any way criticising the action of your department on the film you mentioned—if objection is raised by only one individual to a film which has been duly passed and been exhibited in other centres, do you think it is fair to order the exhibitor to take off the film?
 A. No. But in this particular case the proprietor himself consented to withdraw the film. If he had fought against it action of this kind could only have been taken after careful consideration whether it was justified.
 Q. In that case it would be unreasonable. That would be your general idea?
 A. Yes. But in this case except merely the fact that Muslim religious views were to a little extent affected there was absolutely nothing to which exception might be taken.
 Sir Haroon Jaffer: Do you get from other provinces any instruction or intimation in the event of any films being prohibited there?
 A. I don't get them. They come to the Chief Commissioner. I do receive them from the Chief Commissioner.
 Q. How many such intimations were received during the last month?
 A. I cannot say that without consulting my record.
 Q. Can you say whether you received anything during the last 10 or 15 days?
 A. I don't think I have had any. They do come from Bombay and Calcutta.
 Q. There is no Board of Censors here?
 A. No.
 Q. So they don't produce any films here in Delhi?
 A. None I think.
 Q. So they don't produce any films here in Delhi?
 A. I think so.
 Q. I saw a Board "Eastern Films Company, Delhi" somewhere in the bazaar here.

A. I think we have some cinema films taken here. I mean to say that there are people here who have cinematograph machines and take photographs of anything that is going on. They more or less correspond to the Pathé Gazette.

Q. You mean topical films?

A. I don't think they have actually made any artificial films here. I might be wrong though, because I remember that a company has been started here recently with its headquarters at Delhi. But I don't think it has done anything here yet. It might have done something outside.

Q. Have you seen any posters here?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you think they ought to be censored?

A. There is no need I think. I have seen such posters and handbills here but I don't think they ought to be censored unless there is any particular objection at that time. If there is any particular reason at any time then censorship can be imposed temporarily by an order of the District Magistrate.

Q. Regarding this case of "Moon of Israel," did the Chief Commissioner go into the merits of the case?

A. At that time the necessity for such action was not brought to the notice of the Chief Commissioner. Because the proprietor of the cinema himself came up and said that he did not wish to hurt the feelings of anybody at all. He volunteered to take it off. The whole affair had not gone so far as to necessitate an enquiry into the merits of the case.

Chairman: There was no commotion or anything of that sort?

A. There was a slight commotion owing to the disappointment of the people who came to see the film.

Mr. Green: If a film, duly passed by one Board, is banned in another province, is it automatically banned in your province?

A. I am really not in a position to answer that question because it is the Chief Commissioner who gives orders on that subject.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: Do you know anything about the Social Hygiene Delegation that came here?

A. No.

Oral Evidence of Lieut.-Colonel G. D. FRANKLIN, O.B.E., I.M.S., Chief Medical Officer, Delhi Province, on Tuesday, the 14th February 1928.

Chairman: You are in charge of the public health department in this province?

A. Yes, indirectly. There is an Assistant Director also.

Q. But you are the Chief in this province?

A. Yes.

Q. How long have you been that?

A. For nearly four years.

Q. Did you come across the Social Hygiene Delegation which visited this country last year?

A. I just met them.

Q. Did you have any talk with Mrs. Neville Rolfe or Dr. David Lees on the influence of the cinema on the people?

A. Nothing except in a general way.

Q. I do not know if you have seen their report (Handing the report to the witness). You are concerned more with paragraph 1, I think. Do you agree with the view expressed there?

- A. No, Sir.
- Q. I suppose you had no discussion with them; nor did they consult you on this point?
- A. No.
- Q. I suppose you go to the cinema pretty often?
- A. Particularly in the hot weather, it is a great amusement in Delhi.
- Q. Have you come across any instances like that which they refer to in paragraph 3?
- A. I do not think what is stated here is true. The serials are what attract the ordinary Indian of Delhi. I have noticed that in the cinematograph shows what the people generally like are such things as torpedo boats, fighting, thrills, etc., which are absolutely harmless things. And whenever any exciting thing is shown, they shriek and shout and show great enthusiasm.
- Q. You mean they want some thrills?
- A. Yes, they want thrills.
- Q. You think they are absolutely harmless?
- A. They are absolutely harmless. We call them Woolly West films.
- Q. On the whole, you are satisfied with their moral tone?
- A. I think so. Of course, if you want to read suggestion in them, you can do that in anything. I do not however think that the love-stories of the west need be shown in India.
- Q. I suppose the percentage of such stuff is very small, i.e., lurid love scenes?
- A. I think so.
- Q. Do you feel the necessity for using the film for propaganda purposes in public health?
- A. Yes, I think it has got a great future.
- Q. Have you tried it yourself?
- A. Not actually; but I am having it done.
- Q. You think the film has got a great future in that line?
- A. I think so.
- Q. And that the Government ought to take steps to produce films of that sort?
- A. Yes, the more they produce, the better.
- Q. And similarly for improved agricultural methods and other such things?
- A. I think so.
- Q. The film can be used with great advantage for such purposes?
- A. Yes, I think so.
- Q. Do you think the people are able to follow the film if you show films for propaganda purposes, etc.?
- A. I think yes, if they are suitable ones.
- Q. Have you seen the use of such films in other countries?
- A. No, Sir.
- Q. Your province of course is too small to produce these things?
- A. Except for the Government of India who generally command the money.
- Q. You think therefore that the Government of India should produce films which would be of common use to all the provinces?
- A. I think so.
- Q. Except where perhaps local settings are needed?
- A. Yes, except in the case of the hook-worm disease, for instance, which may be useful to Bengal and Madras, or Cholera, which may be useful in certain parts of India.

- Q. So that local settings may be introduced in the provinces?
- A. Yes.
- Q. On the whole you would prefer a centralised agency throughout?
- A. Yes.
- Q. Both for production and distribution?
- A. I think so, because a central agency would be in a position to distribute the films for particular diseases to particular parts.
- Q. I suppose the Government of India have got a department of Public Health?
- A. They have a Public Health Commissioner.
- Q. He will be in touch with the rest of the country in this direction?
- A. He is in touch with the whole of the country.
- Q. You think that the censorship is adequate, as it is?
- A. Yes. All the films are being adequately censored, I think.
- Sir Haroon Jaffer: Have you got any money for producing educational films?
- A. Not much.
- Q. Did you ask for any money?
- A. I have not hitherto. I have a small grant to combat venereal diseases, and one of the ways of doing this is to get a practitioner in Delhi to give shows with the aid of a cinematograph.
- Q. Have you ever tried hiring films or asking for films on loan from other provinces where they are available?
- A. I think we had a film once, but I am not quite sure.
- Q. Your neighbour, the United Provinces, has got some nice malaria films?
- A. I have not tried them. When I was in the medical school at Indore, I saw some films, but I think they came from Bombay and they were good enough, and we taught the boys with them.
- Q. You do not agree with the views expressed by the Hygiene delegation "Thereby tending to increase the dissemination of disease"?
- A. No, Sir. I think it is an absurd exaggeration.
- Q. You think these films are harmful to the eyes of the children?
- A. I don't think going to the shows once or twice a week will possibly do any harm, unless there is some disease in the eye already.
- Q. I was told that boys under ten should be prohibited from going to the cinemas. You don't agree with that view?
- A. I don't think there is any basis for that remark.
- Mr. Neogy: Don't you think that since the inauguration of the Reforms the touch maintained between the health authorities in the Government of India and the health authorities in the provinces has slackened?
- A. Oh, yes, that is true. I give only my own private opinion. I have had no official dealings that way.
- Q. Supposing we are to have uniform public health films for the whole of India, would not that necessitate a sort of agreement between the public health authorities in the different provinces?
- A. Yes. I think that should be done by the central authority, acting on the advice of local men who know local conditions.
- Q. You agree then that the central public health authorities could not exactly dictate to the provinces as to the way in which such things should be done?
- A. Yes; because the provinces will have to find the money.
- Q. Apart from that, even from the point of view of the necessity for having a sort of agreement?
- A. Of course you cannot force a policy on them.

Oral Evidence of Lieut.-Colonel H. E. STANGER LEATHES, I.M.S.,
Health Officer, New Delhi, Notified Area Committee, and Assistant
Director of Public Health, Delhi Province, on Tuesday, the
14th February 1928.

Chairman: You are the Health Officer for the Province?

A. Yes, for New Delhi, the Civil Lines and the Delhi Province.

Q. How long have you been here?

A. I know this province for six years, but the province was handed over
to me last year.

Q. Before that you were in the Punjab?

A. I was on the Bombay side.

Q. Did you come across the Social Hygiene Delegation which visited India
last year?

A. You mean in Bombay.

Q. Either here or in Bombay?

A. I did not come across them.

Q. Do you think that the cinema is one of the major factors in lowering
the standard of sex conduct in this country and thereby tending to increase
the dissemination of disease?

A. No, I don't think so.

Q. Do you think there is any foundation for such a statement, that it
disseminates disease?

A. I don't think so. It does no more than any other thing. I don't
think the cinema disseminates disease.

Q. Have you come across any instance of any film which had been reject-
ed by large cities in England but was shown in this country?

A. No, not so far as I know. I do not go to the cinema very much.

Q. Have you seen the posters and handbills connected with the cinema?

A. Yes.

Q. Have you seen any objectionable ones?

A. No, I don't think so.

Q. From what little you have seen of the cinema, are you satisfied that
the censorship is adequate?

A. Yes, from what I have seen of it, I can say it is all right.

Q. Do you do any propaganda work for Public Health?

A. Yes, we do.

Q. Do you feel the want of films for that purpose?

A. I think with more films we can get better results. The best way of
doing propaganda work is, I think, through the cinema.

Q. Do you think Government should produce such films for propaganda
purposes?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you think, from your experience of Bombay and this province,
and probably of the United Provinces, that films should be produced by
Government?

A. I do not know anything of the United Provinces. I know only the
Bombay side.

Q. From your knowledge, do you think that Public Health propaganda
films should be produced from a central agency which will be useful to
other provinces also?

A. I think so. General public health questions I think will be common
to all India.

Q. And if local settings are needed, they can be introduced in the
provinces?

A. Yes.

Q. I suppose you have considered the question whether the Government
should produce them themselves or entrust the work to private agencies?

A. No. Of course there are the Red Cross people who have got the
necessary films.

Q. Where do they get them from?

A. They have got a certain number of films on malaria, and they have
some magic lantern slides.

Q. Have they got any films?

A. They have some films too.

Q. What use do they make of them?

A. They show them during the Baby Week.

Q. I suppose Col. Bhola Nath is in charge?

A. Yes.

Mr. Coatsman: You say you would like Government to sanction films for
health propaganda. I take it that any money spent on those films you
would want to be additional to your existing budget?

A. Oh, yes.

Q. You would not be prepared to spend money out of your existing
budget?

A. No, I would not, as far as I am concerned.

Colonel Crawford: You have had no evidence to the effect that films
shown in this country are damaging to the eyes and are of poor quality,
especially those shown in the districts?

A. I should think possibly they would be.

Q. But have you come across any definite complaint?

A. No, I have not. But I think, very likely they would spoil the eyes,
especially the indistinct films.

Q. So you think it would be wise to have any film inspected after a
certain date?

A. I think that would be a good thing.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: Do you think the magic lantern is more satisfactory
than the cinema?

A. The cinema is much more satisfactory.

Q. Have you any fund at your disposal to produce films?

A. No, I have no funds. I have never asked for any.

Q. You don't feel the necessity for it?

A. I think it would be necessary to have such films on cholera, malaria,
etc. But we have not got the apparatus.

Q. If you ask the Government, I suppose they will provide you with the
funds?

A. That is a matter for the Public Health Commissioner of every pro-
vince, to see to.

Q. Do you think the Delhi Municipality will contribute anything?

A. I should think very possibly they would. I am not quite sure, because
I do not deal with the Municipality. Dr. Sethna will be coming here to give
evidence, I think, and he may be able to give some information.

Chairman: Is the Delhi Municipality depending very much upon contri-
butions from the Central Government?

A. I think they get a good lot of money.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: There is a lot of malaria and cholera in Delhi?

A. Malaria, not cholera.

Q. You think that if malaria films are shown, the people will be benefited?

A. Yes, they will be benefited. We show such films every Baby Week.

Q. You are now showing malaria films?

A. Yes.

Q. You only show them for Baby Week?

A. Yes.

Q. If we have a cinema purely for malaria propaganda work, you think people will appreciate it very much?

A. Yes, they would.

Q. You think Government ought to provide you with travelling cinemas of the kind?

A. As a matter of fact we are having such films shown to us during the Baby Week. Some generous donor gave one—I have forgotten who it was—and much use is made of it for propaganda work.

Oral Evidence of Dr. K. S. SETHNA, B.Sc., B.Hy., D.P.H. (Lond.), D.T.M.&H. (Camb.), L.M.S., Medical Officer, of Health, Delhi Municipality, on Tuesday, the 14th February 1928.

Chairman: You are the Health Officer of Delhi?

A. I am the Health Officer of the Delhi Municipality.

Q. How long have you been here?

A. This is the 14th year of my service.

Q. How long has the cinema been in Delhi?

A. Since 1914 when I came to Delhi.

Q. The number of cinemas is growing or is it the same?

A. It has been growing.

Q. How many cinemas were there when you came in 1914.

A. There was only one cinema which is now under Madans. Later we had one cinema in Chadni Chowk and then the Royal cinema. Then there is another cinema at Kauria Pul.

Q. So there are 4 cinemas altogether showing pictures daily.

A. I don't know if all these show pictures daily. They do not get licences from us.

Q. Do you go to the cinema?

A. Unless there is a popular picture, I generally do not go. I like the pictures relating to industries or something in connection with the Health propaganda work.

Q. So you are interested in industrial films?

A. Yes. I am interested in films on the manufacture of motor cars, health, manufacture of cigarettes and so on.

Q. Do Madans show them?

A. Sometimes they show these.

Q. You mean foreign pictures?

A. They are all foreign pictures.

Q. Of what length are they? These films?

A. Some of them are very short, others are long. At times they form part of the Animated Gazettes.

Q. You do not care for the serials or social films?

A. I like more of sports and industry showing pictures.

Q. Do you see Indian films at all?

A. Very few.

Q. As Health Officer of the place do you think the cinema is responsible for any irregular sex conduct?

A. In what way?

Q. By going to the cinema do people get demoralised or lead irregular sex conduct and thereby disease is disseminated or spread?

A. I do not know. I am not an expert to express an opinion on this.

Q. As Health Officer of the place, do you think the cinema is responsible for the spread of disease?

A. I don't think so personally.

Q. Is the cinema responsible for lowering the standard of sex conduct?

A. In my personal opinion it is not. If a picture shows something which is not moral it also shows the results of such conduct.

Q. You mean virtue triumphs over vice. The net result is the little harm there is is undone by the good?

A. I think so, because it also shows the result of adopting a bad thing.

Q. On the whole you think that the cinema is not responsible for any bad effects.

A. It may be in certain cases. It should not be in general.

Q. Generally therefore you are satisfied that the censorship is adequate?

A. It ought to be adequate.

Q. Are you satisfied that it is adequate?

A. I cannot express any opinion on it.

Q. Anyway you do not think there is anything wrong with the cinema?

A. It may be wrong in certain instances but not in general.

Q. So people in the ordinary run of life, understand it aright?

A. I should think so.

Q. Do you do any propaganda work for Public Health.

A. We do it by means of lectures. We had one film taken on "child welfare work" in Delhi.

Q. Where was the film taken?

A. Madans people came down from Calcutta to take it here.

Q. And it is useful?

A. It is very useful.

Q. People understand it?

A. The child welfare work is understood by them.

Q. You think the use of the cinema will make your propaganda work more effective?

A. Yes it will and I am in favour of it.

Q. You think Government should produce such films and supply them to all public health officers.

A. Yes. I think so. I can tell you of one instance. At the last child welfare and Health week exhibition two pictures were shown, one on Hookworm disease and the other on Malaria. They were very good pictures and the public appreciated them. Though the matter was a little technical yet they liked them very much.

Q. Where was the hookworm film produced.

A. I cannot exactly tell you. I think it was Mrs. Bhola Nath who got it.

Mr. Coatman: Is there hookworm in Delhi?

A. No.

Mr. Neogy: Was it produced in Delhi?

A. It was an American film. I saw a boy in it in an American type of house.

Chairman: So you feel the want of such films.

A. Yes.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: Who sees to the sanitation of theatres?

A. In regard to the latrine arrangements and the general sanitation I look to them. The licence is issued by the Local Government.

Q. You have shown films on Malaria and Hookworm. Have you tried Cholera or other diseases?

A. I have not shown others.

Q. Do you know that there are some such films in India?

A. I have heard of them. They could perhaps be got from the Red Cross Society or some such organisation.

Q. Would it not be advantageous to the people to show such films here?

A. It would be. But we want a cinema machine for that. And we have to occupy a cinema theatre for the purpose. At present we have one such machine in the Lady Reading Health School.

Q. Do you know who gave the machine to the institution?

A. That I cannot tell you definitely.

Q. I want to know whether your municipality gives any fund directly for the cinema.

A. We get funds only for delivering lectures. They come in as part of our budget under different heads like Malaria and so on.

Q. You have not recommended any provision for this purpose to your municipality?

A. Our income is limited. It is only Rs. 22 lakhs per annum. We have several obligations to fulfil and have made efforts to introduce compulsory primary education and other things also.

***Oral Evidence of Mr. A. C. KHANNA, Journalist, Delhi, on Wednesday, the 15th February 1928.**

Mr. Green: You are a journalist?

A. Yes.

Q. What paper do you represent?

A. I represent the vernacular press.

Q. You are a native of Delhi?

A. I live in Delhi.

Q. Do you visit the cinema frequently?

A. Very frequently.

Q. As a professional journalist to write criticisms?

A. I go there only for amusement.

Q. Do you visit Indian films as well as western films?

A. Yes.

Q. Which do you consider more popular?

A. Well, if Indian films are properly exhibited they are more popular with Indians. "The Light of Asia" of course did attract a good audience.

Q. That particular film was produced by foreign experts?

A. Yes in conjunction with Indians and with Indian characters.

Q. Which do you consider the best Indian film which you have seen?

A. I have not seen any better film than "The Light of Asia". But my idea is that if the film is properly exhibited it is bound to be popular.

Q. Have you seen Indian films coming from Bombay?

A. I have seen some.

Q. Are any of them good?

A. Not all.

Q. In what way do they fail? Is it in photography or in acting?

A. I think the acting is bad.

Q. The plot is good?

A. Yes; it appeals to the Indian audience.

Q. You are referring to the mythological?

A. India is rich already in such.

Q. The Bombay films, do they represent modern life well?

A. I cannot say. Can you suggest the names of some films?

Q. Yes "The Nurse", "The Telephone Girl", "The Typist"?

A. I think I have seen the first. It appealed to me.

Q. That particular film, did it approach western standards of production?

A. It was nearing that.

Q. You think the Indian films are improving?

A. Certainly they are improving.

Q. But they have a good way to go still?

A. Well there is much scope for that.

Q. They are capable of improvement?

A. Yes.

Q. What do you think of the effect of the cinema on the people of India?

A. That is a question I cannot say definitely.

Q. Do you think that the films have any particular sort of demoralising influence?

A. I don't think Indians as a class are ever liable to be led astray so far as the moral aspect of it is concerned.

Q. What about children and adolescents, any risk for them?

A. They run the risk if they are taken to these pictures where there is much love-making and kissing.

Q. What about Indian students going to cinemas very frequently?

A. I think they should not.

Q. Could the Censor cut out all such scenes?

A. Yes he can.

Q. You consider the love-making and kissing influences the youthful mind?

A. It does.

Q. As a censor you would cut out everything that might possibly harm the youth?

A. The censoring must not be very strict. But it must cut out such portions where love-making and kissing are depicted profusely. Those scenes are harmful only in the case of children and young people.

Q. Do they follow these love scenes?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you think it leaves any permanent effect on their minds?

A. Yes; on the minds of the youth.

Q. If a man goes and sees this kind of film frequently do you think he gets used to it?

A. Well if he gets used to it he may be unmindful of these. Sometimes the effect is otherwise.

Q. You do not think it will affect the minds of older men?

A. It should not at all. They are experienced people and they know that the story will end in disaster.

Q. Do you think people in the cheaper seats, people not well-educated and in some ways childish, do you think they will be affected?

A. They follow the plot and keep in their memory green these love-making scenes if the plot is from Indian mythology and they will surely follow it.

Q. Do you want the censorship to excise all things which might possibly affect youthful or uneducated minds?

A. I do not want the Censorship to be over strict.

Q. Where will you draw the line? Obviously an educated man like you will not be affected?

A. So far as I am concerned I will not be affected. But I do fear it will have a bad effect upon the youth.

Q. Do you know of cases where harm has been done?

A. I am not aware of any. These things are not kept on record; I mean those that have a pernicious effect on the youth of the country. If the courts take some trouble this could be done. The criminals will confess that they did the crime because they went to the cinema.

Q. Is it not possible that prisoners might put this in as a extenuating circumstances?

A. Of course there is much mischief-making and the criminal might do so.

Q. Have you seen any film where evil has been shown to have triumphed in the end?

A. The military and the Police have always the upper hand.

Q. It will be to a certain extent exhibiting that retribution will follow evil deeds?

A. May be.

Q. Let me ask you this; from the films that you have seen, do you think that the censorship has been generally adequate?

A. It has been generally. I look to all sides of pictures. There are of course some suggestions in certain films quite suggestive of crime. There are other sides to the picture. The criminal also sees the end. The man who goes to the cinema may draw any conclusion and the devil gets his due.

Q. On the whole I take it your position is that the censorship should be a little more strict in regard to some love-making scenes but otherwise it is generally adequate? Do I correctly represent you?

A. Yes. It is a correct representation of my views.

Q. You are not frightened about the possible effects of western films on Indian minds, students' minds in particular, that it will lead them to abandon their own customs?

A. I do not harbour any such apprehensions. I think the cinema is the best link to make the East and West meet.

Q. It has an educative effect?

A. I think all sorts of educative and commercial effects.

Q. It shows the Indians, life and conditions of other provinces and countries; you mean in that way?

A. Yes.

Q. I don't know whether you have given thought to any other aspects of the questions referred to in the questionnaire?

A. I would like to say something about British preference. Should India participate in the scheme as outlined in the Imperial Conference for some measure of encouragement to British Empire films.

Q. Yes, what do you want to say on that?

A. Well I would say this as a cinema-goer. I like the picture; not the country; and at times I would like some public announcement by the Government of India or by some responsible people in the country that India dislikes all those love-making and kissing scenes. Of course I would not mind America sending films just to the requirements of the Indians. America so to say has got the best films. Even in England 90 per cent. of the English money goes to America in this connection and moreover America has attracted the best talents of England. Sweden tried the experiment herself and the enterprise failed. I do not think it would be justifiable to put any ban on American films.

Q. There is no suggestion of that in the Questionnaire.

A. I think Government should not have allowed Miss Mayo's book to come to India. If the Government is minding its duty the good traditions of India should be protected. Why an English actress is bringing all those allegations on to the stage.

Q. You think that if the American film producers are told what India likes they would send suitable films? We have been assured by everybody in the trade that the American manufacturers make almost all their profits from their home market, and if she lost the Indian market it would not matter much.

A. If the Americans know what are our needs they will produce films according to our requirements.

Q. It would not pay any producing company to shape their films for India alone; for the whole world the films are made? And in American films love-making can hardly be cut out?

A. That cannot be said definitely; America can produce films according to our requirements.

Q. Your point is that no discrimination should be made in the importation of films?

A. We want the best picture from any country. If the English concerns produce the best lot, well they are welcome.

Q. You do not consider that any artificial encouragement should be given?

A. There should be no preference to any country.

Q. If a business arrangement can be come to for the exchange of films between India and any other part of the Empire

A. Well, India has got none

Q. You mean to say that Indian films are not going to be popular anywhere else?

A. My suggestion is that the Government of India should come forward and take 50 per cent. of the shares of a concern leaving the other 50 per cent. to the American or German people or the people of other countries. These 50 per cent. shares taken by the Government of India should be sold to Indians and the concern should be under an Indian directorate. This is what they did in Japan.

Q. You suggest that Government should take the initiative in forming a company with foreign capital and Indian capital. Cannot a private company in India do this without the aid of the Government of India? Would that not be better?

A. I don't think capital is voluntarily coming in this respect.

Q. You think Government is justified in putting money, which after all comes out of the pocket of India, in such a concern?

A. I think Government would be justified in taking this lead.

Q. You think it is an industry that Government should start?

A. I think that sort of concern should be run if India is to progress at all.

Q. Is there any other point which you wish to speak upon?

A. No.

Chairman: Are you satisfied with the moral tone of the films which you have seen?

A. Of course I do not like films when there is much love-making and kissing.

Q. Did you see any such?

A. Of course I have.

Q. What is it that you do not like?

A. The profuseness of love-making and kissing.

Q. The censorship is not adequate?

A. It ought to be stricter still in this respect.

Q. If this is omitted do you think the film will have any value?

A. I do not think mitigation in this respect mitigates the importance of the film or its attraction.

Q. Can you mention the places where these things are exhibited which you have in mind in this respect?

A. The Elphinstone Picture Palace. There is much love-making in the films shown there.

Q. What is that picture?

A. Charlie Chaplin.

Q. Generally the censorship is adequate in other respects?

A. It is adequate.

Written Statement of the Central Social Service League, Delhi, dated the 8th February 1928.

1. No.
2. (a) Both classes frequent Cinemas. There are 3 Cinemas and generally they are all full. Delhi.
(b) 50 per cent. each.
(c) 10 per cent.
3. Detective, Religious and Emotional drama films. Oriental films are most popular.
4. Yes, to a certain extent.
5. Yes, with a little difficulty.
(a) Not generally.
(b) Yes.
(c) More profitable to show an Indian film.
Yes. "Arabian Nights," "Light of Asia," "Birth of Krishna," "Ramayana," "Rana Partap," "Turki Hoor," "Sheeren Farhad."
6. (a) Yes.
(b) (1) Historical and topical Indian News and depicting stories from National Literature.
(2) Mythology, religious and possibly historical.
7. Cannot give any opinion.
8. (a) Not satisfied.
(b) Lack of guidance. Lack of clear focus films. Lack of knowledge of the period costumes, customs and life of the time depicted.
9. No. Because Block selling generally prevails.
- 10—11. Do not understand the terminology.
12. There is no tax in Delhi.

13. Social, Educational, Medical and instructive films be exempted from Import Duty.

14. Most certainly.

15. Yes. Think so due to cheapness.

16. No. Special guidance and technical knowledge. State aid.

17—18. Yes. Special expert advice. Use of Historical buildings. Use of equipment in Native States and British India. Concession in Railway fares to actors, etc.

19. No knowledge.

20. Expenditure on Historical, Medical, Geographical, Educational and Hygienic Films justifiable.

(b) From Educational Funds.

21. Yes. It should be created.

22—23. Have no knowledge.

24. (a) Yes. Detective and Love films.

(b) No.

(c) Criminal films. To boys and illiterate persons. They learn the modern methods of committing crimes.

(d) (i) Some time necessary.

(ii) No.

(e) In burglary and counterfeiting.

(f) No definite information except general impression.

25. Yes.

26. (a) Yes.

(b) "Razia Begam," Life of Mohammad not depicted correctly.

27. (a) No.

(b) No knowledge.

28. (a), (b) Yes.

(i) Sex films and Criminal films.

(ii) They learn it.

29—31. Yes.

32. Yes. Cannot give any opinion. We suggest a Committee of Educational and Social workers should advise the censor.

33. (a) No.

(b) Yes.

(c) No.

34. (a) No.

(b) Yes.

(d) By Government Educational Department.

35. (a) Do not know.

(b) Yes.

36. (a) No.

(b) Yes. At least two of them.

Yes, they should be paid.

37. Yes.

38. Life of Mohammad and Razia Begam.

39. No knowledge.

40—42. No.

43. Cannot give any opinion.

44. Public bodies and Social workers and intelligent Editors be invited free to advise.

45. (a) Cannot suggest the extent of control.

(b) Yes.

NOTE.—We do not claim to be expert in Cinema trade or Film production. From the Social servants' point of view we are watching the effect this modern entertainment is having on the minds of the people. For propaganda purposes it has proved a great weapon. We used to deliver lectures on health, drink problems with Magic Lantern. Now there is a cry that Cinema should be shown in these lectures. We have in our possession a Cinema Machine, but are experiencing a great difficulty in getting films on Education, health, Sanitation, Medical reforms.

Oral Evidence of Mr. MOHAMMAD AMINUDDIN MALIK, B.A., LL.B., Honorary Secretary, and Rai Bahadur PARAS DAS, Vice-President, Central Social Service League, Delhi, on Wednesday, the 15th February 1928.

Chairman: How long has this Social Service League been in existence here?

A. For the last 7 years.

Q. And what is your position in that league?

Mr. Aminuddin: I am the Honorary Secretary.

Rai Bahadur Paras Das: I am the Vice-President of the league.

Q. Do you think part of your duty is to visit the cinemas?

A. Our duty is to do propaganda work on matters of public health, sanitation, etc.

Q. Do you go to the Cinemas at all?

A. Not generally. We go very seldom.

Q. And you Mr. Paras Das?

A. I don't generally go. I go possibly once in 6 months, that is all.

Q. As regards the propaganda work, do you propagate on public health?

A. Yes, we do. We also do some propaganda work in connection with the amelioration of the communal tension.

Q. You try to bring Hindus and Moslems together?

A. Yes, we do that also.

Q. Do you use magic lantern slides for your propaganda work?

A. Yes, we have been using magic lantern slides up till recently but now we have been compelled to use the cinema for propaganda work.

Q. Why do you say compelled?

A. When we tried to use magic lantern slides we were not able to collect a good audience, so we tried cinemas which we found useful in collecting an audience.

Q. Are you able to get cinema films for propaganda purposes?

A. We don't get them. Only about 7 propaganda films are available in the whole of India.

Q. Have you used those 7 films?

A. Yes, but they are not very good. One was a venereal disease film from Gwalior; films on Malaria, Leprosy and Hookworm were supplied by the Red Cross Society and the Pathe Film Company have only 3 educational films.

Q. You want to have more films?

A. Yes. If we can have one film for communal riots, that will be very useful. We would very much like to have a film prepared on the basis of this pamphlet. (Hands over a copy of the pamphlet to the Chairman). This pamphlet deals with the troubles that might ensue, for example, litigation,

consequent jail life and other things. I might add that this pamphlet had a marvellous effect in ameliorating the condition of Hindu Moslem tension.

Q. What do you mean by "marvellous" effect?

A. These pamphlets were very widely distributed among the public and it had a very desirable effect on the public mind.

Q. And you want to show that on the screen?

A. Yes. I think that will be advisable.

Q. You want to have a film showing that such and such will be the result if you fight each other?

A. Yes.

Q. Does this pamphlet deal with a story or what?

A. It is not a story but we could make it into a story useful for the film showing the effects of riots, etc.

Q. It requires careful handling. Anyway it is not a bad idea. Have you got enough honorary workers to do propaganda work?

A. Yes, we have got some.

Q. Do you confine your work to Delhi city?

A. Yes. We go to the villages also sometimes to do propaganda work. We don't get enough electric supply in the districts and consequently we find it difficult to show public utility films to the mofussil public.

Q. Supposing there is a portable cinema with some generator, you can manage?

A. Yes.

Q. What is your opinion of the effect of the Cinema on the people?

A. There alone we differ. My personal opinion is that it has no bad effect. On the other hand I believe that the public is enlightened through the cinema about what is happening in other parts of the world.

Q. (To Rai Bahadur Paras Das): What is your opinion in the matter?

Rai Bahadur Paras Das: In some respects the cinema is very useful but some of the films showing criminal doings and sex films have a very bad effect especially on illiterate minds. I think it would be better to censor such films more strictly. As regards criminal films, I have written a book on Criminal Investigation which has now been taken as a text-book in the Police schools. Criminals are generally in the habit of inventing new methods of thieving, etc., and I think the Cinema is an incentive in these matters.

Q. Have you any particular instance in view when you say that?

A. I cannot mention any particular instance, because I myself am not a frequent visitor of these cinemas.

Q. Then on what is your opinion based?

A. That is what I have heard from the general public. They think that the cinema is very bad criminally.

Q. You have no personal experience of any film which you think has any criminal tendency?

A. No.

Q. So let us eliminate that. Then what about the sex films?

A. I only desire that they be censored more strictly.

Q. In what respect?

A. I feel that some indecent scenes may be taken away.

Q. What do you mean by indecent scenes?

A. I cannot explain that very clearly.

Q. Do you mean the scenes of hugging and kissing?

A. Merely hugging and kissing is not so injurious. What I object to is the bath-room scenes where women bathe naked, etc.

Q. You refer to the nudity scenes?

A. Yes.

Q. You don't mind hugging and kissing, I suppose?

A. To expose the evils of venereal diseases we ourselves have to show some such pictures. Why, in these days, I find even 5 year old boys talk in private about sex matters, and so how can you expect a 14 year old boy to be ignorant about these matters. I think all boys and girls know about sex matters but the only thing is that their knowledge of sex matters is incorrect.

Q. Then you object only to be nudity scenes?

A. Yes, to the scenes which produce excitement in young minds.

Q. When was it that you last saw such a nude picture?

A. I remember having seen one such 2 years ago and they were very indecent scenes.

Q. Do you remember having seen any other picture?

A. No.

Q. Do you think Indian films are popular with the people?

A. Yes, they are.

Q. Do you think something should be done to encourage the Indian film industry?

A. Certainly. I would advocate the production of more historical films and pictures which don't have anything communal about them.

Q. What do you mean by communal?

A. For example in the "Rana Prasad" there were some objectionable things which would excite the feelings of Mohammadans.

Q. Were they shown here in Delhi?

A. Yes.

Q. Did it create any excitement here?

A. I think it did cause some excitement.

Q. Did you see that film yourself?

A. Yes.

Q. What was it you found objectionable?

A. The pictures seen on the screen were alright, but some of the captions were a little bit exciting. It was not moderate in tone.

Q. But it did not create any trouble here, I presume?

A. The result was that Mohammadans did not attend that film afterwards.

Mr. Green: There was no excitement?

A. There was nothing exciting.

Chairman: Did any Mohammadan gentleman mention anything about it to you?

A. There was nothing which could come within the grasp of law.

Q. Was there any comment about it in the cinema hall?

A. This respectable Mohammadan gentleman who is sitting beside me (Mr. Zahur Ahmad Wahshi) also attended the show. He did not tell me anything about it but I don't know whether he liked it or not.

Q. You say that sort of thing should be avoided?

A. Yes, I think so. I think the language used should be decent so as not to hurt anybody's feelings.

Q. Is there any attempt at producing films in this province?

A. Yes, there was one attempt. Mr. Tipnis was in charge of it.

Q. Do you know where he is now?

A. He is now in Bombay and is expected here on the 18th instant.

Q. Do you want to say anything else?

A. I think we should have more historical, educational, social and medical films. If Government could supply educational films at cheaper rates, then

it will be useful. For educational purposes, I think the cinema is the best thing. I believe these comic films are useless and a mere waste of time.

Q. Do you think if you only show educational films people would go to the cinemas?

A. I think people will go. Films of expeditions and travel will really do good.

Q. Do you think that together with the educational films you must show some other interesting films?

A. Yes. We can have religious films. They will be very interesting.

Q. Who is to prepare them?

A. Private film producers, or the Government could do it. So far as Archaeology is concerned, "Light of Asia" which is a film prepared in Europe, is quite wrong. I have seen Indian films like Sri Krishna Janma, the Ramayana and others which are a true representation of Indian lives and manners.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: Your Social Service League is doing noble work?

A. Yes, they are doing something.

Q. Do you think if you publish a book or a film like your pamphlet you will be able to stop these Hindu Moslem riots?

A. We believe that the public could be educated that way. For that matter, after the distribution of these pamphlets in Delhi, there were no riots.

Q. Do you think if you have such films all the world over you could stop war?

A. I only believe that they would serve as an educative medium.

Q. Unless you remove the root cause of these riots do you think these riots would cease to exist in this country?

A. I believe all these riots could be stopped.

Q. You have Pious ideas.

Chairman: You mean to say that it will be one of the means to that end?

A. Yes.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: Don't you think if you show films on Tuberculosis, Cholera and other subjects, you will be doing much better service to the country?

A. That is one side of the picture and this is another.

Q. What measures will you adopt to draw in respectable actors and actresses to produce films?

A. I can't say. I have no experience in such matters.

Q. Who will take the part of ladies in the films which you produce?

A. We have not produced films ourselves.

Q. What will you do? Who will take the part of ladies if you want to produce films?

A. I was thinking of going round the villages. To collect persons and make them drink and thereby make them merry and then the women also would join them. I thought then I could produce the films required. I was thinking of doing something in that direction but I had no time to do so.

Q. "Rana Prasad" excited you?

A. If I had been a Mohammadan I would not have allowed such things to be shown.

Q. You did not like some of the scenes shown there?

A. No, the captions in some of the scenes were not quite desirable.

Q. Have you an advisory committee of your league to bring such matters to the notice of the Government?

A. We did not think that this was part of our duties. It was only after we saw the Questionnaire of your Committee that we used to visit the Cinemas.

Q. Do you think the cinema is harmful to the eyes of the children?

A. Yes, some machines have had effect. Out of the three cinemas now here, I think one of them is not quite good.

Q. Which one is that?

A. The one near the fountain, the new one that was started recently.

Q. You think there is a bad effect on the eyes in that cinema?

A. Yes.

Q. You think you do better service with the Magic lantern than the cinema?

A. Till recently we were delivering lectures only with the aid of lantern slides, but to attract more audience we have now taken to the cinema.

Q. You think the days of the Magic lantern are gone and it has ceased to be attractive?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you think any help is required from Government in this matter to encourage the production of more films, on the whole?

A. Government should impose a higher rate of Tariff duty on imported films which are not good.

Q. Don't you think Western countries will retaliate by raising their prices on raw films which are sent out to this country?

A. There is danger of that no doubt, but the Government need not impose any tariff duty on such articles, if that be the case.

Q. Do you think Government ought to help the industry by granting loans to film producers?

A. Yes.

Q. On what points do you want to improve the Indian films?

A. The present photography is very bad and they have no good actors and expert scenario writers.

Q. Do you mean by bringing in experts from abroad or by instituting State Scholarships for sending out our young men abroad to study the technique of the art?

A. Both can be done. Some expert help is needed from Government. For example, if we want to produce films like the "Light of Asia" or the "Life of Buddha" Government should render all possible help through their Archaeological departments.

Q. You want Government help. From what sources could Government find the necessary money?

A. Money could be utilised from the Excise revenue.

Q. Will you agree to be taxed further? Do you consider the idea of imposing an entertainment tax good?

A. I think Excise revenue could justifiably be used for this purpose.

Q. What about education? Government is using that money for educational purposes?

A. But still Government should find it possible to help the Industry also.

Q. Why should there not be an entertainment tax as in Bengal and Bombay? Will you agree to an entertainment tax?

A. That is the work of the statesmen and not mine to think about that.

Q. Will you have any objection to pay 2 annas more out of your pocket?

A. If it is a good picture I will not grudge paying that.

Mr. Green: You are very impressed with the value of films as a method of propaganda?

A. Yes.

Q. Would you be prepared to pay a higher rate for good films?

A. Yes, if it is reasonable.

Q. Where do you exhibit your pictures now?

A. Sometimes in the open air and sometimes in buildings, where there is enough electric current.

Q. And you would exhibit them free?

A. Yes.

Q. I was rather surprised at your statement that children so young as 5 would talk about sex matters. Do you think it is really so?

A. Yes, certainly. Generally small boys talk about such matters. That is my opinion.

Q. If this is really the case you consider that what are known as sex films are not going to teach these boys things they don't know already?

A. I admit that. But this thing I was saying as regards the venereal diseases films. When we tried to show films about venereal diseases all the Principals of colleges and headmasters objected. When all the boys are ignorant of the evil effects of the thing and yet when they all know about one side of it, what is the use of keeping them like that?

Q. I quite sympathise with your idea. What I want to get at is, are they hurt by going to the cinema and seeing films if they have that knowledge already?

A. I told you that they are hurt by the exciting scenes.

Q. Despite their knowledge of the thing?

A. Yes.

Mr. Aminuddin: Personally I don't agree with my friend.

Written Statement of Mr. H. A. SAMS, C.I.E., I.C.S., Director General, Indian Posts and Telegraphs Department, dated the 8th November 1927.

GENERAL.

2. (a) In my experience the educated classes of Indians do not usually frequent cinemas. The audience seem to be composed mostly of the servant and the lower classes.

(b) In Simla and Delhi, of which I have experience, the bulk of the audience is composed of British Troops, together with the lower class Indians referred to in (a).

(c) I have not noticed many children at cinemas, but there seemed to be a good many adolescents who may possibly be of an impressionable age.

FILM INDUSTRY.

3. In my experience the most popular film and one which was most patronised by Indians was "The Thief of Baghdad". I imagine, therefore, that the most popular film to an Indian would be an Oriental story (for example, any story from "The Arabian Nights") which he could readily understand.

SOCIAL ASPECTS AND CONTROL.

24. (a) In my opinion a film depicting low life or degenerate high life in Europe or the United States would tend to have a demoralising and injurious effect on an Indian public.

(b) Many of the American films portray a life which the European recognises as immoral, and the Crook plays are undoubtedly criminally suggestive.

(c) In my opinion the films mentioned in (a) and (b), if not actually harmful, cannot be regarded as creating a good impression. They are harmful in that they give a wrong impression of life in other countries, by depicting a phase which is often of an exceptional and therefore, sensational character. They are, I think, harmful to anyone who sees them, whether Indian or European.

(d) From what I have seen of films in India, I do not think censorship is adequate in the case of "sex" films and "crime" films. Many of such films should not, I think, be exhibited in any country at all, let alone India, especially in small towns where there is only one cinema, and the public cannot make a choice of what they would like to see as opposed to what they must see. In large cities where there are several Picture Houses there is a certain amount of choice.

25. Yes.

26. No films which I have seen would, I think, offend religious susceptibilities. But it is obvious that in India especially the greatest care should be taken in censoring films likely to offend religious susceptibilities.

(b) I understand that the Indian produced film relating to the Life of Buddha, though it gave, I believe, no offence in India, gave offence in Burma.

27. (a) A great many films exhibited in India have a tendency to misrepresent Western civilisation and to lower it in the eyes of Indians. I imagine that many of the films representing Western life are quite unintelligible to an uneducated Indian and are largely misunderstood by him. At the same time, my experience is that the Indian audience usually applaud when the hero rescues the heroine from an uncomfortable or dangerous situation and when the villain meets his just deserts. I should say that the results of such Western films are, on the whole, undesirable. The only suggestion I have to make is that the Board of Censors, wherever it exists, should be largely composed of Indians who alone are in a position to gauge the effect of a film on their fellow countrymen.

(b) I do not remember any such film.

28. A film with a tendency to be vulgar, immoral or criminal must, I think, have a bad effect on children and adolescents. It probably has more effect on the latter, as in my experience the mind of a child simply rejects and passes over what it does not understand and assimilates only what it does understand.

29. I am not in favour of certifying certain films as "for Adults Only". This would only advertise the film as containing matter which, in the opinion of an adult, an adolescent should not see, with the result that an adolescent would certainly do his or her best to see such a film.

30. For the reasons given in my reply to 28, I am not in favour of the prohibition suggested.

31. Censorship is the only effective method of guarding against misuse of a film.

32. The censorship of the films should not be "strict". It should be based on common sense. If it were reasonable rather than strict, it should not involve the results referred to in (a), (b) and (c).

34. (a) I am not in favour of a Central Board of Censors. Each Province has its own problems. In respect of films imported into India, the proper and most convenient place for a Board is the port of entry where any harmful film could be suppressed before it has time to permeate the country.

35. (a) If the present Provincial Boards consist chiefly of Europeans the constitution cannot be regarded as satisfactory. For the reasons already given a large proportion of the Board should be Indians.

(b) I am not in favour of a paid censor. It would be almost impossible to find a single censor sufficiently broad-minded to gauge the tastes of a country like India, and the fact that he is paid would, I think, tend to discount the value of his work.

36. (a) If that is the system prevailing in Bombay and Calcutta, I consider that it is unsatisfactory.

(b) All films should be examined by a Board of Censors. In a large city like Bombay and Calcutta there should be no lack of gentlemen of suitable standing and with enough public spirit to undertake to serve on such a Board. There should be a panel so that the whole of the work does not fall on a few Members.

40. Posters, handbills and advertisements for cinema purposes should perhaps be scrutinised, and if any offend against good taste the firms from which they emanate should be warned. Most of the posters and hand-bills which I have seen seem to be innocuous.

44. The Press has an excellent opportunity of maintaining a good standard of films. I doubt whether the Press would go out of its way to condemn a bad film, especially if it is liberally advertised and paid for in its pages. But it could, I think, very easily help the public to appreciate good films by praising them in the body of the paper.

45. (a) Government should certainly exercise control of the film production by the methods suggested in (b) of this question.

Oral Evidence of H. A. SAMS, Esq., C.I.E., I.C.S., Director General, Indian Posts and Telegraphs Department, on Wednesday, the 17th February 1928.

(Chairman: I suppose your experience is confined to Delhi and Simla?)

A. Yes of recent years. I used to go to the cinema frequently in Bombay. So far as I recollect.

Q. In Delhi to which cinema do you go often?

A. I have been only once to the public cinema in Delhi. In New Delhi we have cinema shows at the I. D. G. Club every Thursday.

Q. Who makes the selection of the films for the Club?

A. The Honorary Secretary of the Club.

Q. He gets them from whom?

A. I presume he gets them from Madans. He gets the best he can.

Q. In Simla there are two; is it not?

A. I have only been to two, the Elphinstone and the Prince of Wales. These cinemas are I believe owned by Madans. One goes to whichever has apparently the best show.

Q. Have they got the same programme more or less?

A. Yes, the same kind of programme.

Q. You see very few children in the cinema shows?

A. I have not noticed many, personally.

Q. I notice in your answer to Question 24 (d) that from what you have seen of films in India you do not think censorship is adequate in the case of "sex films" and "crime films". Can you mention any film you have in mind?

A. No. I cannot. In my answer to the questionnaire I meant to say there are some films which struck me as somewhat vulgar or unnecessarily sensational. But I cannot say that I have seen anything objectionable.

Q. Your general impression is that it may be more strict?

A. The censorship should not be strict at all. It should be reasonable.

Q. Is not the view of people apt to differ on a point like this?

A. Yes. But I believe that there is an idea in America that anything is good enough for the East. From some films which I have seen I imagine that in America they have got some such idea. If they have films which their people do not like they dump them here.

Q. I know that is an impression sometimes expressed in the newspapers. But you know that India is a very poor patron so far as the cinema is concerned. There are only about 250 cinema houses in India, all more or less of poor quality.

A. I am not aware of the fact.

Q. As against 40,000 cinema houses in the West we have only about 250 in India which are really running cinema shows.

A. Even in that case they can send good films; nothing prevents that. It does not cost more to send a good film than to send a bad and second rate film.

Q. The hire of the film must pay the exhibitor.

A. Presumably. The censors might I think say that such and such a film is a rubbishy one and that if they find it so it is not fit for India.

Mr. Green: You seem to make a difference by saying "good enough for India" and "good enough for other places"?

A. All I suggest is that if the censors think that a certain film is rubbish, they should say so. I don't know whether that comes under censorship?

Chairman: It is concerned with moral tone and not with artistic censorship.

Q. I suppose you have not seen the rules which are observed in censorship?

A. No. I have not seen them.

(A copy of the rules was given to the witness who glanced at them.)

Q. Don't you think it is rather difficult to introduce aesthetic grounds and differentiate?

A. Yes. But I want the American market to be taught that rubbish should not be sent to India. They now seem to think in America that India can swallow anything.

Q. But don't you think that the remedy lies in the public? If they do not attend these shows their attempt will be a failure.

A. In places like Bombay and Calcutta they can choose where to go. But in small places the public cannot make a choice.

Q. It is difficult for the censors to go on grounds of aesthetics or art. On the whole you think that the audience are able to appreciate where virtue triumphs over vice?

A. That is my experience.

Q. Of the films which you have seen generally the good results produced far out-number the evils?

A. I think so.

Q. The film is useful in the way of broadening their outlook and giving them knowledge of conditions in other countries?

A. Many of the American films show conditions of life in other countries especially in America. Sometimes they give a wrong impression. For instance they give a wrong impression of life in England which is usually simple and homely.

Q. But they have filmed certain good English works like "Bean Geste". That is an American film?

A. Yes.

Q. You are particular that every film should be seen by the Board of censors or at least by a section of them and not merely by an Inspector or Secretary. That is to say, I notice that you prefer censorship to be done by the Board and not by one individual?

A. I do not know what the actual procedure is. But I understand that in places like Bombay and Calcutta they have a paid inspector to inspect the films.

Q. That is true.

A. I would prefer that every film should be seen by more than one rather than that it should be censored by a low-paid inspector who might easily be of deficient judgment.

Mr. Green: What do you mean by "a low-paid inspector"? Do you mean to say that he should be paid more than he is paid now?

A. It is not a question of pay, but it is the class of men you get for that pay.

Chairman: I thought that you rather attached importance to the judgment of more than one individual?

A. Yes. Certainly. I imagine that one individual after seeing a large number of films would get extremely stale.

Q. At any rate you would prefer that certain classes of films at least should be inspected by more than one individual whether paid or honorary; say for instance films dealing with sex or with crimes?

A. I think that every film which comes into this country should be examined by the Board.

Q. Supposing they are merely educational films such as a picture of the Niagara Falls?

A. Of course in that case it is not required. The topical films need not be censored. But ordinary story films or feature films as they are called should be censored as I have suggested. And sometimes the serials also require such censorship. I fear that even in a topical film you might possibly get an indecent subject.

Q. Of course every film must be censored. But the point about which I ask your opinion is, should every film be examined by more than one individual, or would you take that course only in the case of serials and feature films where social things come in?

A. I think the latter course would do.

Q. Because you know the volume of work is very large?

A. I am not aware of that.

Q. I mean to say if they sat at it for 5 days in the week it takes so much time as to necessitate 4 hours' work a day for one film.

Mr. Green: The volume of work is still greater now. There is already 6½ hours work a day. It may be very difficult to insist on censorship by the Board itself. Under these circumstances do you consider it is a practical problem?

A. Do not all these films come through Great Britain first? Or do they come to India direct?

Chairman: The major portion of them comes through Great Britain.

A. In that case, if they had already been censored in Great Britain, it would be of some help. Films already censored in Great Britain need not be subjected to strict recensorship here unless it is from the point of view of the scenario, to read which it would not take a long time, and unless it would appear that the scenario had something to do with religion and might be considered *prima facie* objectionable in India. Censorship in England is presumably good. It would save a good deal of work to the Indian Board if they *prima facie* accept the British Board's decision.

Q. You think that the best judges to decide as to what is good for India will be Indians?

A. Yes, undoubtedly. Indians know better what their countrymen like than an Englishman.

Q. Therefore you would like the Censor Boards to be more largely composed of Indians?

A. I don't know what the composition now is in India.

Chairman: In Calcutta there are 2 Indians out of 8 members and there are 3 in Bombay.

A. I don't know whether the number makes any difference.

Q. The Indians get a chance in Calcutta only very seldom. On the whole you would prefer more Indians on the Board?

A. Whenever a film is being censored an Indian should I think be on the panel of the Board.

Q. Have you ever used the film for your postal department?

A. Yes. We actually had a film prepared about 3 or 4 years ago representing work in the post office. I wanted to bring with me a letter from Mr. Hanson, the late Postmaster-General of Madras, who was very keen about filming the Department.

Q. He appeared before us and he told us about this.

A. He has made certain proposals. I will send you a copy of it.

Q. Yes. Witness: It would be interesting to have a film about telegraphy, showing how telegrams are sent.

A. Many people do not know about the inner working of a Telegraph Office. They might like to know how a telegram is sent or received.

Q. Do you think that will be an interesting type to the public?

A. I think so.

Mr. Green: And educative also?

A. I don't know that it would be educative.

Chairman: They will know what is going on. "Educative" is used in the broad sense of the word.

Q. If private companies attempted to take films of that sort would you give facilities for that?

A. Certainly.

Q. Or would you prefer a Government studio taking it?

A. I don't mind who takes it up as long as it is done. My department will give assistance.

Mr. Green: The total time for all inspection of films for censorship is about 6½ hours a day in the whole of India including Bombay and Calcutta. If you have a rule that no film can be passed without inspection by members of the Board don't you think it will impose a great strain on their time, etc.?

A. It will. Perhaps ladies may be employed for this purpose. They would probably make good censors.

Q. There are certain ladies also on the Board now.

A. I don't know whether they attend regularly.

Q. That is the difficulty. And then censorship may have to be done at not very convenient places and times.

A. What times?

Q. Not the same time as the shows at the theatre. In addition to the time spent in inspecting the films the persons have to get back to write their report and they have to fix a time with their colleagues to meet and discuss the objections if any.

A. What is the difficulty?

Q. If we find practical difficulties in that suggestion, is your objection to paid censors insuperable? It is not chiefly a question of the capacity of the censor?

A. Yes. But if it is not practicable, you must presumably fall back upon the paid censors, either men or women.

Q. We must have educated persons with a certain amount of taste in the subject?

A. Can you let me know what type of men or women you have in Bombay or Calcutta?

Q. People with university qualifications and who have travelled abroad.

A. That would suffice.

Mr. Neogy: I take it that you are anxious that some sort of discrimination should be made on aesthetic grounds between different kinds of films which come from abroad and may be passed by the Board of Censors?

A. That is what I should like.

Q. Such of the films which do not come up to the mark on aesthetic grounds, should they necessarily be rejected by the Board unless they infringe those rules which you have read?

A. What I said was it would be a lesson to the market in the United States if some of the second rate films were rejected altogether.

Q. One suggestion has been made that in the case of those films which are passed, a classification might be made, say A and B, and supposing the A class represents the better of the two classes of films, a sort of rebate of the import duty may be allowed in the case of A class films on the recommendation of the Board of censors. It does not mean that the B class films should be cut out. For the encouragement of the better class of films this course is suggested. Would not that meet with your objection, supposing the other way was not practicable?

A. Yes. But who is to say that such and such a film should come under such and such a class?

Q. The Board of Censors. They might attach a certificate that this film would be deserving of that kind of encouragement and on the production of that certificate the customs authorities might allow a rebate.

A. I don't know what the implications are, but it seems a good suggestion to encourage the good films and discourage the bad ones.

Q. So that would satisfy you if the other alternative was not practicable?

A. If it is possible to reject an inferior film, not because it is immoral but simply because it is rubbish.

Q. You recognise that it is rather difficult to impose that obligation on the Board?

A. I don't recognise it. If it is rubbish why not send it back to America saying that it is rubbish and that we do not want it?

Q. Is not judgment likely to differ on the question of aesthetic merits?

A. The average person could say whether he is pleased or not pleased with a film.

Q. Can you give an instance of that sort?

A. Yes. For instance one or two films in which I have seen a gentleman of the name of Fatty Arbuckle. They were vulgar.

Mr. Green: He is dead, professionally.

A. De Mortuis.....I think from the view of India it would be useful to teach the American market that they cannot send to India all their inferior films simply because they think that anything is good enough for the East. They must be taught that anything is not good enough for the East and that all these rubbishy films of theirs are liable to rejection. I think the censors have a right to do that.

Colonel Crawford: Taking this matter again, there would have to be a dividing line as to what is rubbish and what is not. You have the same thing in regard to moral grounds also, as to whether a film should or should not be rejected. As regards the dividing line in those pictures the average man or woman could say whether it is immoral or not immoral. It is the same thing in the case of aesthetic grounds?

A. Yes.

Q. As regards the use of the cinema, the railway authorities are making films to teach the public how to travel, etc. Is not such a course profitable in your department?

A. I cannot see myself how it would be.

Q. Just now you mentioned in the matter of educating the public in things connected with Post and Telegraphs the proper stamping and addressing of letters. Do you not think that your Department would save establishment if this were done?

A. I don't think so. Because our work is so wide-spread.

Q. Would you be prepared to establish a studio?

A. I would not be prepared for an expensive studio; but if there is a Government studio working, I think we might be prepared to spend a small amount, on a Departmental film. After all, we don't want to advertise the posts and telegraphs. People must come to us. It is not a question of increasing our revenue.

Q. You don't think you would increase your revenue?

A. Certainly not. The public want their telegrams and letters to be expedited. That cannot be achieved by the cinema. It may perhaps be interesting for people to see the inside of a big post office or a big telegraph office or some of our instruments.

Chairman: For instance you have instructions in your telephone directory as to how the phone should be used and all that. Don't you think it would be a paying proposition if such things are shown on the screen, so that the instrument may not be mishandled?

A. I don't think so. The instructions are for the benefit of the public. If one holds the phone improperly or mishandles it, the man at the other end cannot hear him. That is a question of the advantage of the public. I don't think that the exhibition of such matters on a film would increase our revenues at all.

Q. Probably it might give longer life to the machines?

A. I don't think so. Some people do mishandle the phone; but they themselves suffer in having to wait till the machine, when once it goes out of order, is repaired. Of course we are ready to take any opportunity to show how a telephone should be handled and how it should not be handled; but I don't think it will tend to increase our revenues.

Q. But would not the cinema help the queue habit?

A. Yes; in certain respects it would perhaps be useful for the purpose. For instance in some of the offices, there is a regular scramble and everybody wants to get his business attended to at once; but I doubt whether the film can do anything in that direction.

Q. If the people see the thing done on the screen, they would learn?

A. Of course it would be a very good thing if it could teach them.

Colonel Crawford: Supposing you were to take a film say of your office or of a London office, don't you think that would be useful?

A. Yes; it might be useful. But even that would not increase our revenues.

Q. You suggested that there ought to be a more reasonable censorship. Do you think Indian ladies will be coming forward to act for the emotional side?

A. I cannot say; it is for the Indians to say.

Chairman: Whether Indian or European, the danger is that the social service ladies who have all sorts of notions are apt to come in.

A. I agree that you don't want cranks or faddists. If you could get the ordinary, reasonable lady, it would not matter if she was an Indian or European. Women, I think, would have a quicker perception of what is or is not likely to be acceptable.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: What provisions have you, Mr. Sams, for the prevention of smuggling of indecent films coming in by book post or parcel post?

A. We can prevent such things under the Post Office Act which does not allow anything indecent or obscene to go through the post; if such things are sent, they are liable to penalty.

Q. Can you tell me how many such cases occurred last year?

A. I cannot say.

Q. Is any attempt being made by your department to stop that?

A. Not in particular.

Chairman: Has any such case come to your notice in the case of imported films?

A. No.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: They probably pass unnoticed?

A. The Customs have to look into them.

Mr. Green: The control of the foreign post is primarily with the Customs?

A. Yes.

Chairman: Every duty-payable article has to go through the Customs?

A. Certainly, bookposts, parcels and letters have to pass through the customs, and they can be opened.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: You advocate a stricter control?

A. I don't advocate stricter control; I only advocate a more reasonable control.

Q. You give concessions for press telegrams in your department. Suppose news films come from abroad. Do you think Government ought to reduce the import duty?

A. It is not for me to say that. It is a matter for the customs.

Q. What do you think personally?

A. I don't think it is necessary. If a particular film is purely for commercial purposes and if the man importing it is likely to be benefited by it, I don't see why the duty should be reduced.

Q. Except perhaps in the case of the topical news, etc., that you see on the screen before the cinema starts. That is very educative, is it not?

A. Personally I should like to see more of the topical film, because it is interesting. That is my personal opinion.

Q. Then you think that it will be beneficial if more concession is extended to them?

A. I don't think there is any necessity for any concession. If there is more demand, naturally there will be more supply.

Q. How would you like the idea of having a paid officer with an advisory committee?

A. I have already said that the ideal thing would be to have a sufficiently large panel of unpaid censors; but if that is impracticable, you might have a paid censor.

Q. Would you like to have a paid board of censors?

A. A non-paid board is better, I think.

Q. Have you seen British films, besides American films?

A. I have seen several British films.

Q. Do you think they are of the same kind of flavour?

A. I think that they are far superior to the American films, they are more interesting and they are more artistic. "If Winter Comes" is an excellent film. As far as I am a judge, British films are better than American.

Q. Is it your opinion that the Government should help the Indian film industry?

A. I cannot say. As far as I know, the Indian film industry does not exist.

Q. Many films are now being produced in India.

A. But there is no studio, I think. I am not prepared to express an opinion on the question.

Chairman: You have probably not considered that question?

A. I have not.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: Do you think these films are injurious to the eyes of children?

A. I cannot say. An oculist could give an opinion.

Q. You are not in favour of having separate children's performances?

A. I think they are unnecessary.

Q. If the films are harmful to the children, I want to know if they can be prohibited from going to the cinema?

A. Personally I have not yet seen a film which children should not see. Generally children reject what they cannot understand.

Q. Supposing you are asked to form a board, would you include all the interests there, i.e., representatives from the public health department, the army department, etc.?

A. I think it is entirely unnecessary. We simply want a board with reasonable people, without representatives from any particular interests at all.

Written Statement of the Adjutant General in India, Army Headquarters, India, dated Delhi, the 31st January 1928.

I am directed to forward for the information of your Committee the remarks of Army Headquarters, India, on the subject of their enquiry.

2. Replies from the military point of view to the questionnaire are also attached.

3. If oral evidence is required, Army Headquarters will be represented by Colonel J. H. F. Lakin, Deputy Director of Personal Services who will be present in Delhi.

INDIAN CINEMA COMMITTEE.

The replies to the questionnaire which are set forth below have been compiled from the opinions of experienced officers of the Army in India and are endorsed by Army Headquarters.

2. The Army has a very direct interest in the matter under examination. The Army in India includes some 100,000 British officers and other ranks and about 240,000 Indians.

The British ranks constitute a very large proportion of the patrons of the Cinema in India, and Army Headquarters therefore, have a special responsibility in safeguarding the soldiers' interests in this connection.

3. The connection between the soldier and the cinema may be conveniently considered under three headings:—

- (a) Recreation.
- (b) Training and Education.
- (c) Propaganda.

(a) Recreation.

4. Under the conditions prevalent in India, the soldier is largely dependent for his recreation in the evenings on attractions outside his barracks. The provision of healthy amusement by means of cinema films of the right stamp, presented under attractive conditions forms one of the chief deterrents in the pursuit of less desirable occupation for the soldier's leisure hours. In the answers to the questionnaire, an indication is given of the class of film which should prove an attraction while at the same time avoiding the demoralising effect produced by films in which the sex interest is unduly stressed. It may be stated here that the military authorities are prepared to co-operate to the fullest extent in their power with the cinema industry in the encouragement of interesting amusing and sane presentations of a type to attract the soldier. On the other hand, the military authorities have every intention of preventing the soldier from being subjected to demoralising influences of any description. Films of which the main theme is sex or which depict controversial questions of race, religion or politics are not suitable fare for the soldiers' mental consumption, and the military authorities will at all times oppose the soldiers having access to cinema performances

which present such features. Should any cinema theatre make a habit of presenting films of this nature, the attendance of soldiers will be definitely prohibited.

5. Although it has been necessary to refer above to the attitude of the Army towards the more unsatisfactory class of films (and these are by no means uncommon in the larger towns of India at the present day), it may be reiterated that the chief desire of the military authorities in the matter is to co-operate to the fullest extent possible with the cinema industry to their mutual benefit. The desiderata, which the military authorities seek, are:—

- (i) Pictures of an amusing, healthy and attractive nature.
- (ii) Clean and comfortable surroundings.
- (iii) Charges suitable to the soldier's pocket.

6. The military authorities do not wish to encourage the institution of regimental cinemas in areas in which such cinemas would compete with private business concerns. In the larger cantonments it is sometimes the case that cinemas are situated at a considerable distance from and occasionally in surroundings, which are very undesirable from other points of view. In some instances, it is possible for cinema patrons to obtain alcoholic drinks of inferior quality within the precincts of the building. Cinema buildings are often deficient in reasonable comfort in the matter of seating and lighting accommodation.

7. The military authorities invite the co-operation of the cinema industry in the provision of films by the institution of circulating libraries to provide recreation in the smaller military stations, which are only occupied during certain months of the year—principally in the hot weather, and in which conditions militate against the establishment of cinemas as private business concerns.

8. As regards charges for admission, the following may be taken as rates which are considered reasonable for first class films presented under reasonable conditions of comfort:—

British soldier	12 annas.
Indian soldier	4 annas.

9. The foregoing paragraphs have been written principally in the interests of the British soldier.

The Indian soldier is not, as a rule, a patron of the cinema principally because he is unable to afford the prices of admission. Whenever it has been found possible by regimental arrangements to secure the attendance of Indian troops in large numbers, they have been found to be a very appreciative audience. This remark applies particularly to films which deal with:—

- (a) War incidents.
- (b) Life in England or the Overseas Dominions.
- (c) Natural History, Agriculture and Shikar Subjects.
- (d) Historical dramas.

The Indian soldier is also attracted by comic films of the knockabout type provided they are simply represented and within the grasp of his experience and mentality. It may also safely be assumed that an audience of Indian soldiers would be attracted by the representation of Indian historical or mythological film-plays, but it would be imperative that such films should be devoid of incidents calculated to create racial, religious or communal animosity or to bring the profession of arms into contempt.

(b) Training and Education.

10. Army Headquarters (General Staff Branch) is concerned with the training and education of the British and Indian soldiers and of the British soldiers' children.

Army Headquarters has for some years been examining the possibility of enlisting the co-operation of the film industry in the training and education of soldiers in India. As an experiment a few films produced by the War Office dealing with subjects connected with purely military training have been circulated. These films were made and paid for by the Army itself and are held at Command Headquarters for circulation. Military authorities hire a cinema hall and show the films at rates, which are agreed upon by the local military authority and the local cinema manager.

11. It is found that although the cinema proprietors are always most willing to assist, this system is not satisfactory owing to the expense incurred by the Army and for this reason it has not been possible to develop training and education by use of the cinema. Military authorities would welcome the co-operation of the cinema industry in this matter, and are only too anxious to arrive at some definite agreement for mutual benefit. Army Headquarters consider that if foreign films producers control the supply of films in India, either directly or indirectly the interests of the soldier are not likely to be properly served.

(c) *Propaganda.*

12. The military authorities are anxious to co-operate in the presentation of films, which will assist the British or Indian soldier in his career as a citizen after leaving the Army.

For the British soldier, the films which would be of most value in this connection are:—

- (i) those which depict accurately and without exaggeration life in the Overseas Dominions, or
- (ii) technical films which show various industrial processes.

For the Indian soldier:—

- (i) Films showing agricultural or industrial subjects under conditions which are applicable to India, and
- (ii) Films dealing with Citizenship, Hygiene, etc.

It is understood that a travelling display of films of this nature, recently organised by the Government of the Punjab, attracted large audiences.

REPLIES TO QUESTIONNAIRE.

1. See preceding general remarks.
2. (a) See paragraph 9, general remarks.
- (b) No remarks.
- (c) Cinemas in or near cantonments are largely patronised by soldiers' families, frequently including young children.
3. As regards Indian soldiers, see paragraph 9, general remarks.
5. No Indian produced films of special value to the Army are known to exist.
6. (a) A fair proportion of films exhibited should be of this description.
- (b) Audiences of Indian soldiers contain a large proportion of individuals who may be described as illiterate in the sense referred to. Such audiences require simply presented films dealing with subjects suitable to their mentality, e.g., shikar, topical, historical, mythological and perhaps comic films of the "knockabout" type.
7. See general remarks and paragraph 6 (b).
8. (a) Present conditions do not meet Army requirements.
- (b) Foreign produced films and high charges are contributory causes. A central Board of Control with which Army Headquarters would have direct relations offer a solution, provided Army requirements will receive their due share of recognition.

9. The cost of production is too high for the Army authorities to undertake their own production of films for training purposes as they would like to do. A recent quotation obtained in India was Rs. 2 per foot. In England the War Office can arrange production at 1½d. per foot through their own facilities (ordnance service) or 3d. per foot at trade rates. Local monopolies exist, e.g., in the Quetta Cantonment.

10—13. No remarks.

14. Yes.

15—17. No remarks.

18. Army Headquarters are ready to co-operate with private enterprise for film production to their mutual benefit. The institution of a Central Film Board in direct relation with the Department of Education, Health and Lands and with which Army Headquarters would correspond would be an improvement from the point of view of the military authorities.

19. See answer to 9 above.

20. Army Headquarters are able to afford financial assistance to a limited extent in the production of films suitable for training or propaganda purposes.

21. Army Headquarters consider that a private enterprise, if centralised and controlled, would be preferable to a state monopoly.

22. Army Headquarters are greatly in favour of a policy, which will encourage the exchange of films within the British Empire.

23. (a) Such films would be most useful to the Army for use in propaganda and especially in connection with vocational training. The military authorities are anxious to use films depicting life and industry in the Dominions in order to bring to the notice of the British soldiers the advantages of settling in such Dominions on discharge. Such films would be of distinct educational value to the Indian soldier also.

(b) The matter might be dealt with by a sub-committee of the Imperial Conference.

The Dominions in many cases wish to attract the British soldier settler and in all cases to advertise their produce to the remainder of the Empire. Military authorities in India are ready to ensure adequate facilities for the exhibition of films of this nature, possibly on reciprocal basis. Army Headquarters would remark that if an Imperial programme is to be carried out, it is of great importance to free the cinema industry in India, as in the rest of the Empire, from foreign control.

24. (a) Yes, in some cases.

(b), and (c) It is considered that in India the large proportion of films, which contain undesirable features, e.g., films portraying drunken orgies in so called "high life" and in history, crook stories, which indicate that a life of crime is distinctly fascinating, are harmful. Such films are particularly harmful to semi-educated and illiterate classes and children in that they have not sufficient knowledge nor can they obtain guidance to show them that what they see is only sensational. In this connection it may be pointed out that a greater and more lasting impression is made on the mind by means of pictures than by reading and hearing, hence the danger in this country of so many of the "Western films". There is also the point that a visit to the pictures in India is more of an event than it would be in England, where it would form only one of the many factors of social life. whereas in this country it is for the British soldier the principal means of obtaining a harmless evening's recreation.

(d) There is not sufficient censorship at present in India, because films of this sort, which may pass many peoples' standard of decency and fitness, are possibly the only ones which are presented in particular places. Army Headquarters consider that films, which have "sex" or "crime" as their principal subject should be in a minority compared to others.

(e) and (f) No direct evidence is obtainable as to any increase of the crime in the Army due to the cinema, but certainly films of a certain class may be held to excite undue temptations.

25. The audiences for which the cinema caters in India are mostly composed of men whereas in the West the large proportion of the audiences are women and children. East and West possess codes of morality and mentalities which differ in certain important aspects and it is unlikely that films produced primarily for the Western audiences would be adaptable to Eastern requirements.

26. (a) Yes.

(b) It is understood that certain films such as the "Ten Commandments", "The Lions and Claw of the Moon Child" and "Razia Begam" were found offensive to religious susceptibilities and were withdrawn, although in one case the film has been passed by a Provincial Board of Censors.

27. (a) Yes. See general remarks above and the answer to question 25.

(b) Army Headquarters consider it of equal importance that any films exhibited abroad, which have a tendency to misrepresent Indian civilization, should be banned.

28. Films in which vice is often made alluring and in which the moral of the picture is that life consists in having a "good time" must be harmful to children and adolescents and illiterate people, i.e., to all who have not the experience and training necessary for them to see such pictures in the right perspective.

29. Army Headquarters consider that if certain films were certified as "for adults only", it would be of benefit to the married soldier, who has to consider taking his children to the cinema with him. Parents frequently have to take the children, because they are unable to leave them at home by themselves.

30. No, provided certification of films as "for adults only" is carried out.

31. Yes, but the standard of censorship in India requires raising to a higher general level.

32. See reply to 31 above.

33. (a) A strict censorship would not interfere unreasonably with the recreations of normal people with a sane outlook.

(b) Strict censorship would undoubtedly cause a falling off in the attendance of certain type of pictures but it is probable that this falling off would be more than counterbalanced by the more frequent attendance at the more attractive type of picture.

(c) No.

34. (a) A Central Board of Censorship in a suitable place should:—

(a) maintain films at a satisfactory moral level.

(b) if in or near Bombay by which port presumably most films enter India, no inconvenience to the trade would be caused.

(b) Provincial Advisory bodies to keep the Central Board in touch with local requirements might be necessary.

(d) An entertainment tax would seem to be the most suitable method of financing the Board.

35. (a) At present the constitution of the Provincial Boards takes little if any cognisance of the requirements of the Army and is, therefore, unsatisfactory from the military point of view.

(b) There is much in this suggestion, but see the answer to 34 (a) above.

36. No remarks.

37. (a) No remarks.

(b) Yes, e.g., the case of the film known as "Ten Commandments" quoted above.

38. "Ten Commandments." It is believed that the films called "Amar Singh's Dagger", "After six days" and the "Red Peacock" also come under this category.

39. No.

40. Film posters and especially hand-bills should be rigorously censored. In certain cases hand-bills advertising perfectly ordinary and harmless films contain an exaggeration of minor incidents therein which have some sex appeal. The distribution of hand-bills and exhibition of posters of this nature should be dealt with as police cases and in more pronounced instances should render the publisher and distributor liable under the law relating to the distribution of obscene literature.

41. No marked improvement in the moral standard of films is noticeable in India.

42. Censorship must be arranged to suit the convenience of the trade, as regards locality and the rapidity with which cases are settled. The creation of a healthy public opinion, which will express its wishes as regards the films to be shown, would both assist the trade and lessen the censor's duties.

43. (a) Yes.

(b) The present system of control of the import has not prevented the introduction of certain undesirable films. It is possible that under present circumstances films giving false impression of India may find their way out of the country.

(c) A satisfactory control would be established if production in India is controlled by license and there is proper supervision for import and export.

44. The Press should assist largely in maintaining a good standard of films:—

(a) by refusing the advertisements of doubtful films.

(b) by honest and outspoken criticism.

(c) by plainly marking "puffs" as advertisements. The best means of improving the standard of films in this country is the creation of strong public opinion, and this is a matter in which the assistance of the press is indispensable.

45. (a) Government should exercise control over film production by license and inspection. In the case of the instructional type of films Government co-operation and supervision would be necessary.

(b) Yes.

***Oral Evidence of Colonel J. H. F. LAKIN, C.S.I., Army Headquarters, at Delhi, on Friday, the 17th February 1928.**

Chairman: I have seen your remarks. What is the definite suggestion you make about providing cinemas for troops?

A. We have some types of films now which are British films. But they are not quite adequate. We are not, for financial reasons, able to have them for all the units. We have them only for certain units.

Q. You keep certain bounds for the cinemas, I suppose. If the troops want to see cinemas, are they allowed to go and see?

A. Ordinarily no restrictions will be placed on their going anywhere they like; but if we have any reason to suppose that the films shown are objectionable, of course it will be necessary to place some sort of restriction.

Q. We have heard in several places that Indian troops do not avail themselves of this amusement very much. Have they any other form of amusement, do you know?

A. No, I don't think so. A certain amount of amusement is being given in most of the units in the way of having institutes, clubs or some such things to which the troops can go.

Q. Don't you think you can provide cinema houses, from army funds, where private people can exhibit?

A. I do not think it is possible.

Q. Can you not provide a hall for the cinema?

A. In certain cases it has been possible, by private enterprise, in the units to do something in this way; in certain cases they have also actually built halls, I think, by private enterprise.

Q. Probably if you are able to provide the halls in your regimental lines, it may be easy for private exhibitors to take their exhibits there and give special shows for the troops?

A. That is very doubtful; but I think in many units, experience is gaining and some attempts are being made in that direction.

Q. You would surely prefer educational films, in a broad sense?

A. Yes. We have three kinds of requirements; the training requirement, which is really a small matter from the point of view of the cinema industry; the recreation films; and what we call the propaganda films that really matter much. The British films particularly have been found to be very suitable for the troops.

Q. Supposing you get them, where will you be able to show them unless you have got a cinema house?

A. So far as recreation films are concerned, the question should be considered by the industry; but as regards the training films, we are prepared to make local arrangements for having them. Of course, what we can do in that direction is, as usual, limited by finance.

Q. We were struck very much with the absence of amusement for the Indian troops. We should like to see that something is done for them. They don't go to the ordinary cinema houses in any appreciable number?

A. No, they cannot afford to; because most of them have families to keep up and they have not a good margin left for recreation. But this is being done, whenever opportunities are available, within the units.

Q. Supposing an exhibitor undertakes to give special performances for soldiers, would your department be inclined to encourage him?

A. Certainly.

Q. By making any contribution towards his expenses?

A. We can guarantee a house for the purpose; that is all.

Q. Have you ever tried it with private exhibitors? i.e., to give special performances for soldiers?

A. I have seen it done pretty frequently in my own regiment. I have no knowledge of the other regiments.

Q. As regards training films, would you like to have films of battles, etc.?

A. We should find them very useful. They are very much used in England and the cost of production is small; but here, the actual cost of production is really prohibitive as compared with the rates obtaining in England.

Q. You have tried it here?

A. Yes, to a limited extent. I have discovered that the cost worked up to Re. 1 a foot; but in England, using the Government machinery they could produce it for a good deal less, I think.

Q. How do they do it in England?

A. They are sometimes done by contract with private companies and sometimes the Government do it in the Army department. In England they have got the necessary machinery, but we cannot afford to have our own machinery.

Mr. Green: One section of the Army department produce these films I suppose?

A. I have not gone into details, but I think that is the case.

Chairman: Who did it for you here when you attempted it?

A. A firm in Lahore. I cannot say now who they were, but I can find that out.

Q. You wouldn't have any objection to a private agency undertaking it?

A. I shall be only too glad to give them the local settings, etc.; of course we should have a voice in saying what things should be shown. We don't want to be forced.

Q. In that view, would you prefer that Government should have a studio of their own which can be used for your purposes, i.e., for preparing your films, rather than leave the work to private agencies?

A. I am inclined to think it would be better; but I do not see why we should not allow private enterprise to take them.

Q. Is there any military objection to that?

A. No.

Q. For instance you may have something connected with forts which you may not like to be exhibited to the public. You may have some military strategic positions which you may allow only your troops to see, but not the public?

A. I don't think there need be any apprehension about that. The type of films that we may require for training the troops would be these representing certain methods of warfare, and the troops can visualise such things and recall them to their minds and do their work more successfully.

Q. Do you think certain films should be shown only to the troops and not to the outside public? That is what I want to know?

A. I see no objection to showing them to the outside public.

Q. So that, if such films can be shown both to the troops and to the outside public, it will be a paying proposition for private agencies?

A. I think so.

Q. It will pay them to produce films of that sort. The public also will be interested in such films. But would you give facilities to the private agencies for producing such films?

A. Yes; we will be glad to give them help in any particular way; but of course we must naturally decide what films should be produced for our purposes, and we must see that the films are correct, from our point of view.

Q. That is, you want such films to be produced under your supervision?

A. Yes.

Q. Have you seen any films yourself to which you would take exception?

A. Personally no. But the remarks contained in the statement were compiled from the experience of select officers all over India and Burma; and we have certain reasons to suppose that there are such films.

Q. Are they recent experiences, or experiences of the past?

A. Recent experiences, I think.

Q. Unfortunately there is no reference to any particular film in that connection. You know "The Ten Commandments" was one of the films which ran for many weeks in several parts of the world. Have you seen it yourself?

A. No.

Q. I do not see what objection can be taken to "The Ten Commandments" by any one?

A. Its presentation was stopped, I think.

Q. You say in reply to question 26 (b): "It is understood that certain films such as "The Ten Commandments", "The Lions" and "Claw of the Moon Child" and "Razia Begum" were found offensive to religious susceptibilities". Whose religious susceptibilities?

A. I cannot give you the details, but we have a report to that effect. Perhaps it was thought they would have disturbing influences over people who are more sexually inclined.

Q. Have you heard of any definite complaints with regard to particular films shown at any place where you have been, about any films being objectionable?

A. I think so from our point of view. These films I have mentioned here.

Q. You say religious susceptibilities. Did the objection come from the soldiers themselves?

A. I don't think so.

Q. From the outside public?

A. I think there are certain films which the troops should not see.

Q. In answer to Question No. 25 you make a difference between the codes of morality and mentality between the east and west. I suppose western life must be shown in a western manner and not in an eastern manner.

A. I think many aspects of western life should not be shown.

Q. How should you cut it out? Censorship?

A. Yes.

Q. If you produce films depicting western life how are you to cut them out?

A. There are very many films which make an unnatural appeal and an unhealthy appeal to the people.

Q. The unhealthy appeal would be to any human being not particularly to the easterner. The point is supposing the British Board of Censors have passed a film as fit to be shown there don't you think that would be a sufficient guarantee unless there are particular local objections?

A. With that qualification it would certainly do.

Q. You speak about different codes of morality and mentality between the east and the west? How do you expect the censor to have regard for it?

A. I object to all such types of American films which are sensational and are not elevating in any way.

Q. I should like to know of instances which you have in mind to bring out the objections?

A. I am not sufficiently acquainted with it, I have no first hand information but I have heard of one, "Son of The Sheikh" which was produced in America. I have been told that it was considered to be unsuitable.

Q. Do you go to the cinema much?

A. Not much.

Q. You say in answer to Question No. 35 that the Board of Censors take little if any cognisance of the requirements of the Army and the films passed by them are therefore from the military point of view unsatisfactory. Do you mean films which will have a military value?

A. Not military value. I am talking about recreation. We want good, clean stuff which is amusing. At present there is no firm which does this. We would welcome any body who would undertake this.

Q. I suppose you are aware that the military are represented on the Board of Censors, at Calcutta, Madras and Bombay?

A. I am not aware of that.

Q. Do you think the requirements of the soldier are different from the requirements of the ordinary citizen so far as entertainment films are concerned.

A. Of course there is not much difference. But then we have no means of protecting the soldier from what he ought not to see.

Q. Is that not more a point for the inside military authorities than of the film censorship Board? The films have to cater to the public taste and not to any particular section.

A. I think the Military should be consulted.

Q. Can you give any instances of films shown in England but not shown here and which from your point of view should have been shown?

A. I cannot mention any.

Q. On what is that statement "the requirements of the army are not considered" based?

A. A large number of films which are shown outside are not of the type which we should like the military to see. We have not much control.

Q. Do you think there is any difference between the standard of film shown in England and those shown here?

A. I do think so.

Q. There is not a sufficient number of theatres? There is not enough competition?

A. That is part of the reason.

Q. You have got very few cinema houses here. They have in England more than 4,000 whereas we have only 250?

A. Quite so.

Q. Why should not the military funds contribute to supply cinema houses?

A. That is quite impossible in the present circumstances. We are unable to obtain sufficient funds even for objects which we consider more important.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: I think there are Y. M. C. A.'s catering for the amusement of British troops.

A. Yes.

Q. Do they give free shows at times?

A. I am not aware.

Q. Perhaps they give shows at a nominal price?

A. Yes.

Q. Have Indian troops facilities for outdoor games?

A. Yes.

Q. Who pays for these games of football, for the things?

A. The money is generally raised by subscriptions, largely from officers, and the troops also make their contribution.

Q. Can no arrangement be made in the canteens of the Indian regiments for shows at nominal prices by the Army Department?

A. It is impossible. We want suitable buildings for that and have got to bring in the films, etc.

Q. These cinema shows can be shown in the open air also?

A. Yes. But I should like very much to encourage the demonstrations given by the travelling cinemas.

Q. Have you any such funds for the amusement of the troops in the Army Department?

A. No.

Q. With the different regiments?

A. It varies in different commands and in some it may be possible to devote funds for such things.

Q. Would it not be possible for Army Headquarters to provide for this?

A. Much as I should like it, it is not possible.

Q. It would not be very much?

A. That I cannot say. There are a large number of military stations.

Q. Would it be possible to go into contract with some company like Madans to show these pictures to Indian troops and have the cost paid from Army Headquarters?

A. I think it is impossible.

Q. May I know the reasons? Cannot the money be provided for by Army Headquarters?

A. We would welcome anything of the kind. At the present moment the Unit is paying for anything of this kind. It would be impossible for Army Headquarters to find funds on that scale.

Q. You say there are no funds. Suppose they are provided would it then be possible to do so?

A. Yes.

Q. You think Indian troops appreciate the captions in Hindustani better than the English language?

A. Yes. I think that it would be a great help to have the captions in both languages.

Q. We were just told that there are representatives of the troops on the Censor Boards. You do not know anything about it?

A. No.

Q. Do you make any enquiries from these officers who are on the Board? Evidently they know nothing of the cinema as they are being transferred about every three months. It would be a great help if these officers were stationed at a place for three years at least?

A. I think it would be a great help if this were done.

Q. Was any objection raised before when there was no representation on the Board of Army Headquarters? Was anything brought to the notice of the different Governments by Army Headquarters?

A. There was no representation of the Army on the Board so far as I am aware. It is for the local commands to look to. We have not made any representations. The point was not raised until your Committee was appointed.

Q. You have said something about the monopoly at Quetta. May I know what that monopoly is?

A. The monopoly is held by Kelly, at any rate he holds the monopoly for the cinema in that cantonment area for a period of 7 years which expires about 1930.

Q. Monopoly from whom?

A. From the Secretary of State.

Q. Through the Cantonment Board?

A. Through the General Officer Commanding the District.

Q. Is there any other case like that?

A. That I cannot tell you.

Q. I know of another in Poona. Such monopoly is not given in the interests of the industry?

A. Certainly not given in the interests of the soldier too.

Q. When does this monopoly expire?

A. I think in 1930.

Q. Such monopolies should not be encouraged in the future?

A. Certainly not.

Q. Have any steps been taken towards that end?

A. As cinemas become more general and more units possess cinemas of their own there would be no question of any monopoly.

Q. In Poona they do not allow any other cinema to be built? At present there is only one. I am told it is leased for 30 years. The man pays very high rent about Rs. 300 per mensem for the ground alone?

A. I have no knowledge.

Q. Will you make enquiries about it?

A. Certainly.

Q. In any case you are not in favour of such monopolies?

A. No.

Q. There were recruiting films prepared by your department during the war for the purpose of encouraging recruiting?

A. I have no personal knowledge.

Q. I want to know who prepared them?

A. I think Colonel Crawford could say that.

Colonel Crawford: I don't know myself.

Q. There are producing companies in India. They are in need of certain facilities such as forts, troops and things like that, have they ever applied to you?

A. Never to Army Headquarters. They might have applied to the local Commands.

Q. The Army Department would be pleased to grant such facilities?

A. Certainly yes.

Q. May I know what funds are at the disposal of the Army Headquarters for educational purposes through the cinema, what portion for the production of cinema films or for hiring them?

A. I cannot tell you.

Q. It must be in thousands?

A. Yes it must be a suitable sum. I am afraid the amount would not be considerable.

Q. There were objections raised in Calcutta as far as I know regarding certain posters. Was it brought to the notice of Army Headquarters?

A. I think it was.

Q. With what result.

A. No action was taken. I do not know what action was taken locally.

Q. You are for censoring such posters?

A. I have said so.

Q. No action was taken then?

A. Not that I am aware of. The action must have been taken in Calcutta I think.

Q. There is a case mentioned in your reply to 26 (b) "Razia Begum". Do you know what objection was raised? Have you seen the film yourself?

A. No: It was a report from the Allahabad officer.

Q. In 43 (b) you say that the present system of control of imports has not prevented the introduction of certain undesirable films. You mean the Customs authorities?

A. There are still a large number of shows which are not suitable from our point of view and the present system does not prevent that.

Q. You mean the import and export are under the Customs authorities?

A. Yes.

Mr. Green: Customs can deal only with obscenity.

Q. What representation do you want for Army Headquarters?

A. We want some central agency with whom we can correspond in regard to Army requirements.

Q. There are the censor boards?

A. They are not applicable to the whole of India.

Q. You do not want any representative on the Board?

A. I do not think it would be practicable. We want to have some other influence on a body which can speak for the whole of India.

Q. If you join the Censor Board, you have a voice there?

A. I don't think the whole time of an officer of the military department need be spent. It would be unnecessary. All that we want is a central agency with which we can correspond.

Colonel Crawford: What are the recreational requirements of the army. Could you let us know the number of cinemas that cater to the requirements of the army?

A. I have not got the information. It would take some time.

Q. You mean months?

A. Yes.

Chairman: If you send it by the end of March it would be good.

A. We should welcome the institution of cinemas in some of these hill stations where troops would be stationed during the hot weather every year. That is one of our greatest wants.

Q. Presumably cinemas over which you will have a certain measure of control?

A. Not direct control, yes.

Q. Who gives the licence, the original licence for the setting up of the cinema?

A. The Cantonment authority.

Q. The Army has the primary control in the matter of their own Cantonment Board to grant licenses to such houses as would show the type of films that the Military want to show? Would it not be a better arrangement?

A. Yes. But I think the general feeling is that it is unwise to interfere in private enterprise.

Q. Do you find any difficulty in getting programmes?

A. I think it is very much a question for exhibitors. In my personal experience we have some working arrangement with Kelly in Quetta.

Q. Presumably you would like to get a fair portion of British films?

A. Certainly.

Q. Are you aware that there are separate houses to some extent dealing with British films to day?

A. No. I am not.

Q. So far as the Indian troops are concerned you think the difficulty is about the captions used in these films? And that is the reason for their films for the use or recreation of the troops?

A. If that is so the exhibitors would have discovered the point before now. Anyway that is another point.

Q. To turn to the possibility of increasing finance for recreation, have you considered the possibility of permitting the use of troops to produce pictures as the English Navy has done? Is there any objection to that proposal from the Military point of view?

A. I don't think there could be any objection provided it is not inconsistent with the training of soldiers.

Q. I mean for the production of Indian films. Supposing a private film producing company wants to take a film of the frontier regions, etc., will you have any objection to your soldiers taking part in the production of such a film?

A. I have no objection, provided it does not interfere with training.

Q. I understand that a company paid nearly £2,000 into the Army canteen fund for the production of a film in London with the help of the Army?

A. I think it was a mere attempt.

Q. You might even get some income from the production of educational films for the use or recreation of the troops?

A. An offer like that could be very well considered.

Q. Have you any suggestions to make on the educational side? You say for the use of British Troops you want Empire Films so that the activities of

the troops in the various parts of the Empire may be shown to the troops here in India?

A. The only offer, so far as I am aware, was made at the Imperial Conference. I think it will be possible to appoint a sub-committee to deal with this question when a Central Board for India has been formed.

Q. Well, I have already dealt with the possibility of producing films by the troops and also the possibility of producing films directed by yourself, I mean the Military authorities? Could you cable for information on these subjects?

A. I think, I will be able to get the information here. I agree your suggestion is quite appropriate and useful.

Q. When you come down to the moral question: will I be correct in supposing that the moral tone of the troops will be somewhat different from the moral tone of the public from the point of view of the fact that the Military are separated from their homes for longer periods and that suggestive films are more dangerous to them from their point of view than from the point of view of the general public?

A. We agree with that, but it is very difficult to prove.

Q. I suppose it is a definite point worth consideration?

A. Yes, certainly.

Q. Was there any occasion for placing any picture out of bounds for the troops?

A. I can't probably find one.

Q. Sir Haroon Jaffer referred to some posters. I suppose objection was taken against them from the point of view of the troops?

A. Yes.

Q. There is no necessity for further safeguards, I suppose?

A. I don't think so.

Q. You want to get the type of films you have thought of for shewing them to the cantonment regiment in your area?

A. The difficulty is, I think, due to this. There are private cinemas which frequently change stations and therefore they go to the frontier also. We believe that something should be done.

Q. I notice you make a plea for the soldiers' children in answer to question 29: the danger of ear-marking films useful for adults only?

A. Yes.

Q. Is it not possible to bring out something in the nature of a summary of films imported into this country and say such and such are suitable for children, so that adults might take their children to such shows?

A. Yes, it might be done if summaries could be honestly produced. Generally, the posters and hand-bills exaggerate the more sensational things seen in the picture. Very often they manufacture fictitious things also.

Q. In America there is a public body which classifies films according to those useful for adults, adolescents or children. In like manner if the Central Board could devise some such means to classify the films, then that would be useful, I think?

A. Yes, that might be tried.

Mr. Coatsman: In the case of smaller frontier stations where regiments have been stationed have you made any special arrangements for the recreation of the troops, I mean are there any cinema arrangements there?

A. Some arrangements have been made in bigger stations. I cannot tell you whether there is a cinema at Munzi or not.

Q. In a place like that you would like to have a Regimental cinema, I suppose?

A. Yes.

Q. Normally, you would not encourage having a regimental cinema at a station where there is private enterprise already in existence?

A. We would certainly prefer having a private enterprise rather than a Regimental cinema. We would give the private cinema all the help we can.

Q. In these smaller stations that I am thinking of you don't make any special arrangements to give the troops cinema performances by means of the travelling cinema?

A. It would be well if arrangements could be made in that direction.

Q. In your written statement you have mentioned the desirability of showing films representing life in the Dominions. Have you had any such films hitherto?

A. No, not out here till now.

Q. Have you made any arrangements in that direction?

A. We have tried to get the films from the War Office and our idea was to have a small library for such films. But various reasons, chiefly finance, stood in the way of our so doing.

Q. Would it not be possible to get your required films through the High Commissioners of the various Dominions?

A. That is a matter on which we would welcome the assistance of experts. We cannot offer enough money at present.

Q. What I meant was whether it would be worth your while to request the Dominions to assist you?

A. I think, no doubt, it is a very good idea.

Q. And when you get these Empire films for the use of Troops, would you have any objection for them to be shown for the use of children in schools?

A. Of course I will not have any objection whatsoever.

Mr. Neogy: You have referred to the bars attached to the Cinemas where alcoholic drinks of inferior quality are catered. Do you think these are necessary for the popularity of the cinema house?

A. No, they are not necessary if the pictures shown are of good quality.

Q. Supposing the bars were altogether done away with. Would you have any objection?

A. I think, personally speaking, I would prefer the abolition of these bars.

Q. I suppose there won't be any objection from the Army Department either if these bars are closed?

A. None at all.

Q. You have already stated that the Army will be prepared to co-operate with private producers in the production of good entertainment films. Supposing any story like Alexander's invasion of India were to be filmed, I suppose your soldiers will have no objection to wear the uniforms that will be necessary for the occasion; or say, a film depicting the Moghul period is to be produced, I suppose your soldiers would have no objection to wear the uniforms of the Moghul period?

A. We will have no objection to doing anything, provided such work doesn't clash with the regular training of the troops. I also think that doing such things would only be an extension of what is being done in London in the Naval and Military Tournaments, etc.

Q. It will also be an amusement for the soldiers who take part, I suppose?

A. There is already a tendency to get up torchlight tattoos and things of that sort. I think it could be done if it would not seriously interfere with the regular training work.

Q. Of course, I agree you will have to proceed very cautiously?

A. Yes.

Q. And you would not ask for any prohibitive donation, I suppose, as a condition of the Army people assisting the production of these pictures?

A. No, I don't think so.

Mr. Green: I gather you don't consider that the presence of an officer, frequently junior and who changes at short intervals, on the Boards of censors is particularly useful, and therefore you are very strongly in favour of some sort of central authority?

A. Yes.

Q. And I take it, therefore, if that authority comes into being you will have no objection to the Military representation on the existing boards being discontinued?

A. I have no objection.

Oral Evidence of Lala RANG BEHARI LAL, M.L.A., Advocate, Delhi, on Friday, the 17th February 1928.

Chairman: You represent Delhi City in the Indian Legislative Assembly?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you go to the cinema often?

A. Yes, of and on.

Q. Do you see Indian pictures?

A. Very few of them.

Q. Why, are they not shown here?

A. Yes; we sometimes get some pictures.

Q. You would like to see more Indian pictures, I suppose?

A. Yes.

Q. What is the difficulty now?

A. Most of the pictures now shown here are either from America or Germany and those countries have no ideas about India.

Q. In which cinema do they show Indian pictures here?

A. They show them in all cinemas. There is no reservation at all.

Q. And are they well attended when Indian pictures are shown?

A. Yes, certainly.

Q. And why don't they show Indian pictures more frequently?

A. Because, Delhi has to take her turn along with the other cities and towns in India.

Q. You think more Indian pictures should be shown in this country?

A. Yes, dealing with Indian history, mythology and social life.

Q. Do you advocate the expenditure of public money in encouraging the film industry in this country?

A. Yes, certainly.

Q. From what little you have seen of Indian films do you think they require considerable improvement in technique, etc.?

A. Yes.

Q. Would you advocate scholarships being instituted for sending our young men abroad to learn the technique of the industry, photography, direction, etc.?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you think it will be a useful expenditure of public funds?

A. Yes, certainly.

Q. From what you have seen of the Western films, do you think their general moral tone is good?

A. In some cases it is not.

Q. So, you would like those films to be shown in India?

A. No, I would not like them to be shown here.

Q. What is it you are afraid of?

A. For instance we see the crook films, how people enter houses and pilfer articles. When these scientific ways of pilfering are noticed by pilferers in India they try to imitate them in actual practise.

Q. That is no doubt the popular impression. But the policemen who have given evidence before us have all told us that there is no effect that way?

A. From what I have seen in the papers, I am led to think that dacoities committed in a scientific form have been on the increase in this country. Then there are the descriptive films which also affect the morals of the people in the country.

Q. Abduction by motor-cars, etc., is it?

A. Yes, daring and adventurous deeds of that sort.

Q. Do you think our criminals are not trained in that way?

A. They have trained themselves better by seeing such pictures.

Q. So, your fear is that they are likely to learn new methods of crime?

A. Yes, that is it.

Q. Your suggestion is that such films should be banned altogether?

A. I would advocate a little more strict censorship.

Q. What have you to say about sex films where social life is shown? Do you think they are alright?

A. No, I don't think so. Some of them have a bad effect on Indian life.

Q. What scenes would you avoid?

A. The way in which some of the actors in these films make the kissing and hugging and all sorts of things.

Q. You would avoid too much emphasis on kissing and hugging, I suppose?

A. Yes.

Q. You think public opinion demands it?

A. So far as Delhi is concerned, I think so.

Q. You think Indian public opinion demands that there should be stricter censorship in that direction also?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you advocate the use of films for educational purposes and for propaganda purposes?

A. Yes.

Q. I suppose you are for having public utility films?

A. Yes.

Q. Who do you think should produce such films?

A. Films should be produced in India if possible.

Q. Do you think Government should do it?

A. Government should substantially help private companies doing film production work.

Q. You have no producing agency here?

A. Yes, we had one.

Q. You mean the "Great Eastern Corporation"?

A. Yes.

Q. Is it working now?

A. I think it is practically defunct now. I think it was concerned in the production of the film "The Light of Asia". I think one gentleman

by the name of Mr. Jagat or Jagadev went to Germany in connection with the production of that film.

Q. What other encouragement do you think Government should give to the Indian film industry?

A. As I have already said I am for the grant of scholarships to enable our young men to go abroad to learn the art. There are plenty of natural sceneries and historical places of interest in India which could all be utilised to further the film industry in India, both social and religious as well as historical.

Q. What is it that stands in the way of so doing at present?

A. Want of sufficient enterprise and capital.

Q. Why is it so?

A. Because this sort of industry is practically unknown to India.

Q. You think the Government should set an example so as to educate the people in the idea that this industry is very good?

A. Yes.

Q. Would you advocate the Government establishing a studio for producing public utility films?

A. Yes. I thought it would not be a paying concern.

Q. You think the experts there will be useful for private enterprise?

A. Yes.

Q. Would you advocate both scholarships and the establishment of a Government studio or either one or the other?

A. I would advocate both.

Q. How do you justify the use of public funds for this industry more than for any other?

A. Because it is educative. If good films are shown to the people they improve their moral side. It also gives us a broader outlook, both geographically and historically on the other people, and thereby increases the productive capacity of the citizen.

Q. Do you think that public opinion in the assembly would support a proposal for earmarking funds for this purpose?

A. I do not know. It all depends upon the party politics in the assembly.

Q. Would the electorate support such a policy?

A. I think they will be in favour of this.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: Would you yourself support it?

A. Personally I am in favour of it.

Chairman: Do you think that a central board or committee to assist the Government of India in the Commerce Department for the purpose of encouraging and regulating the cinema trade in this country will be advisable? I mean to say a board or committee attached to the Commerce Department of the Government of India?

A. I have never considered about it.

Q. Do you think there should be a cinema department attached to the Government?

A. Naturally when you have got different steps to encourage the industry and you have a studio you must have a department.

Q. You mean a department which will be in touch with the film trade in the world and in the country?

A. Of course you have to be in touch with the world trade; otherwise your films in India will not be paying since they would not find a market out of India.

Q. Do you think the cinema has got any evil effects upon any class of people in this country?

A. In what respect?

Q. In any respect?

A. So far as morals are concerned, yes. As I have just told you on people of impressionable age who attend cinemas, all these films have got some evil effects. I mean films that I have just now mentioned.

Q. Is it your fear or do you speak on definite informations gathered?

A. Certainly there is one thing in all this; and that is after seeing these films young men and boys try to lead luxurious lives at least.

Q. You think that they think about these after having seen the cinema?

A. They dream about it also and they want to lead the life which they see in these films.

Q. They don't go there merely for amusement?

A. They forget the thing so far as the amusement part is concerned. But there are certain other things which have a deeper impression and which they try to imitate afterwards.

Q. That is your settled conviction?

A. Yes.

Mr. Green: You said that the effect of the films on impressionable minds is that they tend to make people lead luxurious lives. Do you think that the film is going to have in some measure any denationalising effect on the Hindus?

A. It is not so much denationalisation as making them enter into luxurious ways and style of living. They are trying to imitate the style of living which they see on the screen.

Q. What is your remedy for it? Do you suggest that these films should be entirely banned?

A. These should be strictly censored according to Indian views before they are shown to the public here.

Q. Would not that mean in many cases banning the films altogether?

A. Certainly it will mean that in certain cases. It won't mean that in all cases.

Q. Do not most of the imported films show a type of life which is luxurious?

A. I don't think so. There are certainly some which show luxurious lives but not all of them.

Chairman: Is your objection to the luxurious life or to the moral tone?

A. Of course they show life which is many-sided. When people of impressionable age see these pictures impressions are left on their minds and they begin to imitate. These things live in their memories and the natural consequences must follow.

Mr. Green: Almost all imported films show a type of life which is more expensive?

A. I don't think so.

Q. You told the Chairman that as the industry is at the present day practically unknown in India it is necessary that Government should aid the industry. Are you aware how many film producing companies are in existence at the present day?

A. I think about 9 are in existence now.

Q. In Bombay alone I think there are 13.

A. I am sorry my knowledge does not go so far.

Q. There are others in Calcutta and there are some in Rangoon. In these circumstances is it quite correct to say that the industry is unknown in India?

A. So far as the question of starting the industry is concerned, the industry has been started in India. But then it is not so very popular and sufficient capital has not been forthcoming all along.

Q. I suppose your experience is confined to consideration of the facts in Delhi?

A. My personal knowledge is mostly of Delhi.

Q. Of the existing companies, there are a certain number of companies doing very reasonable business. If Government started work will not these institutions suffer?

A. But the Government will help all these companies.

Q. Will not this prevent other companies springing into existence?

A. I don't think. Government will help and protect them from foreign competition.

Q. You would like to see the industry actually protected?

A. Yes.

Q. Have you considered the best way of doing it?

A. By giving bounties and by levying prohibitive duty.

Q. As a member of the Legislative Assembly you would vote for giving bounties as well as for levying duties?

A. Yes, in order to make the production of films in India as profitable as it is in Germany and in America.

Q. You think putting on a duty will give you a larger market?

A. The larger market will depend upon good actors.

Q. You told the Chairman that as a result of seeing cinemas scientific methods of carrying out thefts, etc., have sprung into existence. Are you suggesting that these were not in existence before the cinema came into existence?

A. So far as my knowledge goes these things were started only lately. Thefts and dacoities by armed dacoits with motor-cars, etc., were, I think, started only very lately.

Q. You had Thugi even before cinemas came into existence. What about that?

A. But scientific methods of crime began to be handled only after the cinemas came into existence. A person sees a car being stopped on the screen. When he sees that demonstration he is also tempted to do like that.

Q. But he sees the car running in the street also?

A. But the demonstration is not there. It is only on the screen that he sees how other people have done the crime.

Q. You don't think he has got intelligence enough to get the idea himself?

A. No.

Mr. Neogy: Have you any personal knowledge of the production side of the industry?

A. No. But I was interested in this gentleman who went to America. He was my personal friend.

Q. Which gentleman?

A. Mr. Jagdish.

Q. Where is he?

A. He is in Delhi.

Chairman: Was he connected with "The Light of Asia"?

A. Yes.

Q. Can he give evidence before us? Where is he?

A. He is the proprietor of the Photo Service Company.

Mr. Neogy: Can you tell us if there was any Indian capital behind the production of "The Light of Asia"?

- A. Yes. There was. But I cannot give you the exact amount.
- Q. Was there any capital found from Delhi?
- A. Yes. This man (Jagdish) himself spent something.
- Q. You have mentioned that the main difficulty in the way of the Indian industry is about finance, and the second is lack of enterprise. Do you think that the steps you have advocated for the improvement of this industry will be sufficient to draw capital from the market here?
- A. I think so. If people come to know the value of the industry certainly there will be capital forthcoming.
- Q. Do you think that if Government were to definitely declare its policy in favour of protecting this industry, capital would be forthcoming?
- A. I think so. Presumably they will have to do that after inquiring from the Tariff Board. I don't know what the Government will adopt.
- Q. You want some corrective to the foreign films which depict luxurious life?
- A. Yes.
- Q. Don't you think that a larger quantity of Indian pictures of the proper type would be a better corrective than, say, total rejection of certain kinds of films?
- A. I think the proper type of Indian films would.
- Q. Your point, I take it, is that the fact that Indians see one type of film constantly is liable to produce an injurious effect on their minds. If there was a variety of subjects shown, particularly if we had Indian pictures also, the evil might be minimised?
- A. Yes. Naturally the impression which is constantly shown will live in the minds of the youth.
- Q. Do you recollect having seen any picture about "Razia Begum" here?
- A. No.
- Q. Have you seen "Moon of Israel"?
- A. No.
- Q. We were told that both these pictures were objected to at Delhi.
- A. Many pictures were objected to here and these may be two of them. There are many others also.
- Chairman: Were these objected to on the ground that they showed a sort of life which was not quite desirable? Or were they objected to on any other ground?
- A. I think they were objected to on this ground.
- Q. How did they object?
- A. When talking to each other.
- Q. You mean in private conversations?
- A. Yes.
- Mr. Neogy: So you have not seen any of these pictures yourself?
- A. No.
- Q. Would you advocate a local censorship for that purpose, or would you be prepared to accept the standard set by any other Board of Censors elsewhere in India?
- A. There must be a Central Board.
- Q. That would satisfy you?
- A. Yes.
- Q. You would not pay any heed to these local objections if a picture were passed by the Central Board?
- A. No, if it is a duly constituted Board.

Colonel Crawford: You speak about western films as showing a very high standard of life. Don't you consider that the standard of Indians also should be raised?

A. Yes. I desire that their standard should be raised.

Q. You complained that people begin to lead luxurious lives by seeing the cinema?

A. Yes. If they spent money on this that would increase the misery of family life.

Q. You take the labouring class. I have seen them chuck work after 4 days in the week. They have told me that their 4 days' earnings would do for them for the week and that they would come back to work next week. If they had really a desire to raise their standard of living would they not work for all the 6 days in the week and earn their full 6 days' wages? That would only be to his own good.

A. You mean the labouring class in India do this.

Q. Yes. If the film does open up the mind of such a man and shows him that there are better standards of living instead of being contented with his present lot, would not that do him good?

A. Without seeing these luxurious films he can have that benefit also.

Chairman: How?

A. You can simply show him films in which workmen come to their work regularly keeping up to their time and earning their full wages and being happy.

Mr. Green: Will that attract him?

A. I think it will.

Colonel Crawford: You say there is much harm in his seeing higher standards of life on the screen than he himself adopts?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you mean to say that the ordinary labourer in India goes to the cinema? For my part I don't think so.

A. I only mentioned it as a point worth considering. It may be some inspiration to him.

Q. Regarding western films in these countries, I suppose you are entirely for keeping the market open?

A. Yes.

Q. You like to see the films of every country?

A. Yes. I don't like the idea of one country monopolising.

Q. Have you seen many Indian films?

A. I have seen some.

Q. What is your general criticism of the Indian films?

A. In them there is want of good acting, good setting, etc.

Q. To supply these wants would mean expenditure of more money?

A. Yes.

Q. To produce a better class of films he has to get better Directors and better actors?

A. Yes.

Q. The question is that he has got only a limited amount to spend on a film on account of the number of people who come and see the film after it is produced?

A. Yes. Not only he has got a limited amount of money but also he cannot get good actors.

Q. Without spending more money he cannot raise his standard?

A. Yes.

Q. And he cannot spend more money on the production of a film because the market is limited; i.e., if he spends more money he cannot get back his money from the Indian market?

A. Yes. That is one of the questions. If he spends more money he must look to the outside market also for a return.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: You say that you want a stricter censorship. Do you mean to say you want a more representative Board of Censors?

A. Yes.

Q. In that case in what way do you want this Board to be represented? By nomination or election? Government nominate members now. Do you want this system to go on or the different interests concerned to elect their representatives?

A. So far as my view is concerned it is very difficult to get an electorate.

Q. Why? There is the Trade Association of Films, Chambers of Commerce?

A. The first will be an electorate.

Q. Then there are Municipalities or Corporations? They can appoint people on the Board. If Government wants them the Corporations will elect their representatives?

A. Supposing they elect one and the man elected has no particular knowledge of this industry. Then what will be the position?

Q. Will you elect such a person?

A. They have not got experts in this line on the Municipalities and Corporations at present.

Q. Then how do you want this Board to be constituted more strictly?

A. By nomination. No other method should be adopted at present.

Q. For how long one should he be nominated? Is it for one year, or three years or for the whole life?

A. For a certain period, say 1 or 2 or 3 years. Certainly not for the whole life. The period should not exceed 3 years.

Q. Why is capital not forthcoming for the improvement of this industry? Is it due to failures of certain companies?

A. Yes. It is due to failures.

Q. How many failures were there?

A. So far as my knowledge goes there was one in Delhi.

Q. Was the failure due to mismanagement?

A. Yes, to a certain extent.

Q. Was it a private company or a limited company?

A. It was not limited.

Q. You say the posters and advertisements should be censored?

A. Yes.

Q. Have you ever seen any films in which Indians are shown in shady colours? Say as robbers, thieves, etc.?

A. I have not seen any.

Q. Are you in favour of the amusement tax being levied?

A. No.

Q. You have recommended that Government should assist by giving scholarships and other things. From what funds are they to assist in this manner?

A. From the Education Department funds.

Q. Suppose there are no funds. Some tax ought to be levied?

A. I am against levying a fresh tax. Government should find the money somehow or other.

Q. Supposing you show a film about the Battle of Panipat, do you think that it will be liked by the Mahrattas and others who were defeated there? Or even other battles in which Muhammadans were defeated?

A. No matter about defeat. It will show the valour of the persons.

Q. Even in these days when the tension between the two communities is as at present?

A. I don't think it will have any bad effect.

Q. Have you always seen these captions in English or in any other vernaculars?

A. English only.

Q. Do you think that these captions for the purpose of being better understood by the bulk of the cinema going population should be put in any other vernaculars?

A. Yes. They should be put in Urdu and Hindi also.

Oral Evidence of Mr. RAGHUBIR SINGH, B.A., Delhi, on Wednesday, the 17th February 1928.

Chairman: You are running a school here?

A. Yes.

Q. You are running it on some modern lines. What is the peculiarity about it? Is it a residential school?

A. It is a day school where children come at about 7-30 in the morning and go home at about 7 in the evening. Every child has to do that.

Q. Up to what standard?

A. It is a high school.

Q. Do your children go to the cinema at all?

A. Sometimes.

Q. Do they go in charge of the teachers, or do they go by themselves?

A. I never allow them to go by themselves. They go in charge of the teachers.

Q. Do you choose the pictures yourself?

A. I generally send the teacher beforehand to see whether it is a good film and if he thinks it is a good film, then I allow the students to go.

Q. Do you go to the cinema yourself much?

A. Not much, sometimes I go. The type of films that we generally see in Delhi is of a trashy variety.

Q. How is that? I thought in Delhi you could get good pictures?

A. Sometimes we do get good pictures, but very often the cinema-going people seem to be rather for these trashy films.

Q. You have seen cinemas in England?

A. No; I did not go to the cinemas in England. I was there for only a short time.

Q. Or on the continent?

A. Neither there. I have sometimes seen some very fine films in Calcutta and Bombay.

Q. You think those good films don't come here to Delhi?

A. Very seldom, or I do not come to know of them when they come here.

Q. Have you ever used slides in the classes?

A. Yes. Magic lantern slides.

Q. Have you ever thought of using any films for educational purposes?

A. I have got some Baby Pathé films which are sometimes used in the school.

Q. What for?

A. Just for pleasure.

Q. What sort of pictures do you get?

A. I have not got a large selection of pictures, and I have not cared to spend much money on it so far. I think the children are very interested in moving pictures, and if there are really good films, they will benefit by them. I also think that the general mass of films should be improved either through good censorship or by some other means.

Q. Have you seen Indian films?

A. I have seen "The Light of Asia". That is the only thing I have seen.

Q. Who are the Delhi people who are interested in "The Light of Asia"?

A. Mr. Moti Sagar's son was interested, as far as I know.

Q. What is his name?

A. Mr. Prem Sagar.

Q. Is he here?

A. I do not know. There is also a photographer who was connected with the film, and I think he was also financially interested.

Q. What is his name?

A. Mr. Jagadish Prasad, I think. He belongs to the Photo Service Company. He has got a branch here in Raisina but his big shop is at the Kashmere Gate.

Q. I suppose you had no connection with that?

A. No.

Q. But on what do you base your impression that the films require better censoring?

A. I think with so many other educational facilities which exist in the country, the cinema is certainly a potent factor and the State ought to exercise some control over it. I do not know whether it can, but I think it ought to, over the choice of films that are shown to the public.

Q. I suppose you are aware that almost all the films are being censored either in Bombay or in Calcutta?

A. I do not know from what point of view they are being censored.

Q. They have certain rules.

A. But I think if they are censored by the boards from the point of view of the morals of the general mass of people who go to see them, it would be much better.

Q. Perhaps you are not aware of the rules. (Handing over the rules of the Bombay Board of censors). Are they not fairly comprehensive?

A. Yes; but the ordinary films that are shown generally misinterpret things to the average man that goes to see them. My impression is that the largest source of income to the film exhibitors is from the people who pay annas 4. I think passionate scenes or scenes which show too much of the frivolity of western life generally give a misinterpretation and create a wrong impression on their minds. Such things give them a bad taste.

Q. You think that passionate love-making scenes should be prohibited?

A. Yes, especially those which are obscene. For instance, I have seen "Les Miserables". There was another film I saw in Calcutta which depicted on the screen the love of a parent for his children—I forget its name. It was very attractive, and I am sure everybody would like to see it and be benefited by it. That is the type of films which should be seen by the people.

Q. But you cannot have a programme always of first-class films or very good films?

A. Quite so; but the more we can have of them the better. The mythological films certainly have a great charm for the people and such films generally attract very large crowds.

Q. Can you tell us why Indian films are not coming up?

A. I presume some are being produced.

Q. Here in Delhi?

A. In Bombay and Bengal they are producing some, I think, but I am afraid they are being produced without expert knowledge; and it might mean a set-back for the Indian film industry, if they are not properly produced. There is not much beauty in them.

Q. You think they have to be improved?

A. I think they ought to be improved.

Q. What do you suggest should be done in order to improve them?

A. It is very difficult to say.

Q. Do you think the Government should do anything to encourage the Indian film industry, say by giving subsidies, or by giving scholarships for people to go abroad and learn the industry?

A. That will be very useful, I think. I have heard that already there are some Indians studying drama in Russia and various other countries which are supposed to be advanced in this subject; and there is a definite desire on the part of some educated Indians to go abroad and find out ways and means to improve the Indian drama. A beginning seems to have been made; but it is a question of greater encouragement. How that encouragement should be given I cannot suggest.

Q. Have you seen any of the Bombay productions?

A. I have not seen any.

Q. Nor any of the Bengal productions?

A. No, except some which are shown as part of theatrical performances.

Q. You mean topical?

A. No. Supposing a man runs away in a drama; they just then put out the lights and show on the screen where he is running, what he is doing and all that.

Q. Do they introduce such things as part of the drama?

A. Yes.

Q. Anyway your general impression is that the Indian film industry should be encouraged?

A. I think so.

Q. And you are also of opinion that there should be stricter censorship so far as the love-making scenes are concerned?

A. Yes.

Q. How is it that Indian capitalists are not coming forward to help the film industry?

A. There has not been the necessary expert knowledge required in the industry. Indian capitalists will certainly come forward if we have expert knowledge. It is the case more or less in every industry, I think.

Q. Did you see the "Moon of Israel"?

A. No.

Q. Do you know of any film objected to by any section of the public in Delhi?

A. No, I have not heard of it.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: You are conducting a school on modern lines?

A. Yes.

Q. Don't you think you can give instructions in the class room with the aid of the cinema?

A. Yes, I have always thought so and we might one day carry out that idea. We formed a board of education here in Delhi two years ago. There is a board of secondary education here which conducts the Matriculation examination, and I am a member of that board. We are going to start from this year, spending about two thousand rupees a year on education

by cinema, or by gramophone. I think there should be some central place from which information could be obtained about such things by any person interested in a school, or by a municipality or agricultural societies and others. It will be of great use if there is a central or provincial bureau to which people could write and get information. In fact, that has been my problem all along.

Q. There is no bureau here?

A. There is no place, as far as I know, where I can write and get any information I want about films. I have often thought of buying a cinematograph apparatus; but why I have not done so is that first of all there is no place wherefrom I can get information as to the best films that can be secured. There should also be, in my opinion, some society or bureau which might lend us these films. It might need some initial outlay no doubt, but it would pay in the long run.

Q. Don't you think there is any need for more educational films?

A. Yes, there is a need at present for these educational films.

Q. I think there are many available at Patel and Sons, Lahore. Have you tried them?

A. I shall take that address. My idea is that if there is any organization like the one I suggested, it would be better.

Q. That is, a bureau or library from where you can get these films?

A. Yes.

Q. Why should you not produce some such films yourself with the help of some educated persons?

A. I think some small films have already been produced and are shown in the baby shows, etc.

Q. Why don't you do so yourself?

A. I cannot do that in my school in any particular manner.

Q. Can you not give instruction to the boys in your school with them?

A. Yes; but it is a question of funds, as I have already mentioned. I can buy a cinema apparatus; but I want some organization from where I can hire the films and show them once or twice, give them back and get fresh stock.

Q. Is there any school where this cinema industry is taught?

A. The cinema industry does not exist in the country at all.

Q. Do you think such schools should be started?

A. Schools are useless unless you have a regular industry.

Q. But there are already 350 cinemas in India and there are many producing companies?

A. But what are the classes to do with them?

Q. You can start classes for the actors, photographers, scenario-writers, etc.?

A. I do not know what facilities exist in the country and what amount of money will be necessary for the development of this industry.

Q. Do you think these films are injurious to the eyes of young children?

A. I am afraid you must ask that question of an eye doctor.

Q. You have not shown any film in your school at any time?

A. No, except the small Baby Pathé films I have got.

Q. If they are torn, don't you think they would affect the eyes?

A. Yes; they would affect the eyes of anybody. To see such a film would be a strain on the eyes.

Q. Is this industry looked down on here as a low industry?

A. Delhi is not different in that respect from any other place.

Q. I want to know what the Delhi people think of this industry. They don't come forward with the necessary capital required for starting producing companies, etc.?

A. I have just answered that question and I shall repeat the answer. If really reliable experts come forward for producing films artistically, it would be certainly worth while for the capitalists to invest in the industry. I do not know whether the experts are available or not, but I know the capitalists have not come forward so far.

Q. If they come forward, the capital also will be coming forward?

A. I expect so.

Q. Will you be ready to assist financially people coming forward?

A. I personally will not be able to do so.

Q. People with plenty of money, will they also come forward or not?

A. They might as in other industries, that are run in the country. It all depends upon the ability of the people who want to run the thing.

Mr. Green: On what do you base your suggestion that films require more censoring, seeing that you have not seen many of them, only a very few?

A. I am afraid I am not a person who goes to the cinema very often. But that is my general impression.

Q. Then I will not press you.

**Oral Evidence of Sir JOHN MARSHALL, Kt., C.I.E., Litt.D.,
Director General of Archaeology, on Monday, the 20th February
1928.**

Chairman: We won't trouble you long, Sir John, especially as you are not well. I suppose you have got the Secretary's note on the points on which we would like to have your opinion?

A. Yes.

Q. Have you got anything to say about it?

A. Only a few observations. I think there ought to be some Manual or Dictionary of antiquities illustrating the life of the people in Ancient India. In India there are no reference books of any kind corresponding to those in Europe on which film producers can base their pictures. Illustrated books of reference such as we have for Greek and Roman antiquities are unknown here.

Q. And so you think it would be well to produce a book of that sort?

A. Certainly; I thought of it some years ago, and I discussed the idea with several Indologists. To be really comprehensive, it would mean the collaboration of a number of experts and the systematic collection of materials and reduction of them to a reasonable compass. It is not a work which could be done by one man.

Q. You think we have the necessary experts available here in India?

A. As far as we (the Archaeological Department) are concerned, we can give a certain amount of information. For instance, if anybody were to require details about costume, arms and the like at the beginning of the Christian era, we could give that. We could also give a great deal of information about the Gupta and Moghul periods.

Q. Supposing Government were to undertake the production of such a book of information?

A. It would be a difficult matter for Government and would take time also.

Q. How long will it take?

A. Several years, I am afraid; we should probably have to get men and train them for the work. Anyway it is not a thing which could be done in 12 months.

Mr. Green: You can probably publish the book in parts?

A. Yes. It would be quite possible to do so and to get different scholars to collaborate.

Chairman: If such a book is produced it will be very useful for the film industry in general?

A. I think so.

Q. And also add to the knowledge of the world from the archaeological point of view also?

A. Yes. It is a thing worth doing. I rather think, though, that the film industry would want a special class of information in such a work. They want data on certain lines and we want data on other lines.

Q. And what is your advice then? Do you think Government should undertake such a project?

A. I doubt if there is any other agency other than the Government that would do it.

Q. Probably, if all the Universities were to join together, they might do that?

A. Do you think that there is any chance of persuading the Government to put money into it?

Q. Why should they not? I think they should; and if I were Government, I would certainly see to it. From the general point of view and from the film industry's point of view also it would be a useful publication.

A. I agree.

Q. And in that way, later on, films produced in this country will not only be very good ones but they would be of international value also. Do you think so?

A. I think so. When I was in London I saw the film "Light of Asia"; though it was undoubtedly a good film, it was very incorrect in detail.

Mr. Neogy: Few people will be able to detect its incorrectness, I suppose?

A. Yes, that is so. Personally I have, of course, made a special study of these things, but the setting of a Moghul place for the life of the Buddha would probably strike most educated Indians as incongruous.

Chairman: What do you think the approximate cost of such a book would be?

A. It is difficult to say at present. I might get a scheme on paper of the various chapters and then consult with the University at Calcutta, which takes a great deal of interest in such matters.

Mr. Neogy: And in this work artists will have to be associated with the Research workers, I suppose?

A. You may perhaps have seen dictionaries of classical antiquities. That is the sort of thing I am thinking of. Artists would not be wanted for that part of the work.

Mr. Green: I suppose artists will do their part of the work after the Research work is over?

A. Yes.

Chairman: Do you think about two lakhs of rupees would do for the whole work?

A. For purposes of films I think it could be far more cheaply than that. I think if we have a sum of Rs. 40,000 we could do quite a good deal towards it.

Q. So that a sum of Rs. 50,000 would suffice would it not?

A. Yes, you might put it at half a lakh.

Q. That is not much for the Government to spend for a work of that sort. Have you any other suggestions to make?

A. As regards the second point we are prepared to give all possible facilities to film producers. I had an interview recently at Delhi with a gentleman whose name I have forgotten for the moment.

Chairman: You mean Mr. Himansu Rai?

A. Yes. We went over the Fort together and discussed the settings for a Moghul film and I told him I was quite ready to help him in the production of his pictures in any way I could and to grant every facility.

Q. That will be very encouraging to film producers in general. Have you got anything else to say?

A. The third point related to films of excavations or other Archaeological work.

Q. Would it be of any use?

A. I don't think so. The only film of that kind that I have seen was one of Tutankhamen's tomb. I was not at all impressed with that film. We can show archaeological excavations well enough with the aid of ordinary lantern slides. The only point is that the cinema attracts people, and lantern slides do not.

Q. Have you anything else to say? I suppose your main point is about the production of a book of information?

A. That is so.

Q. You think it will take more than 3 years to produce a book of that sort?

A. For film purposes I don't think it would take much longer than that. We should make a point of concentrating on those particular chapters of Indian History likely to interest film producers: for example the period of Asoka, Chandragupta and the Greeks; then the Golden Age of India in the Gupta epoch; and the time of the Mughals. These are the sort of periods that would appeal most to film producers, because they afford such magnificent settings.

Mr. Green: And there is also much literature on the epoch?

A. Yes, certainly.

Chairman: And also the Vijayanagar period?

A. Yes. Would you like me to take up this idea and make more enquiries?

Q. If you can give us a rough scheme which could be sent up to Government with our recommendations, it would be very helpful to us.

A. Certainly; I will see what I can do.

Q. Can you send it to us by the end of March?

A. I think I shall be able to send it by then.

Mr. Green: Would it be possible to have in your office a Bureau of Information from which information could be got on payment?

A. Yes, if funds were found for it. We have not sufficient staff at present. Even the compilation of the Manual of Antiquities, of which we have been speaking, would have to be closely controlled.

Q. Do you think it would be necessary for cinema purposes to have any great correctness of details?

A. I don't believe in being pedantic, but speaking generally, one should aim at reasonable correctness.

Mr. Neogy: You say that your Department would work in co-operation with the producers and give them direct access to particular places?

A. Yes, provided that no damage was done to them.

Q. Would not this interfere with your work?

A. It would not.

Q. We were told that a Parsee gentleman wanted to make a film about the Taj but he could not get permission?

A. It never came up to me. But we should naturally, in the case of a film connected with any religious or quasi-religious building like the Taj, have to be very careful about allowing it to be used as a setting for a film that might not be suitable and proper.

Q. You would like to see the scenario?

A. Yes.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: Do you know of a company that is going to take a film of the Taj?

A. I do not know that company.

Q. Have you not heard of it?

A. No.

Q. Did not a producing company approach you for any advice?

A. The only person that I have had anything to do with was Mr. Himansu Rai, who consulted me about a Mughal story. That film had to do with the Fort at Agra. None else was brought to my notice.

Q. Your Department has not produced any film of its excavations.

A. No. I recall that there was a company some 4 or 5 years ago who approached me about filming Taxila. I said we would give them all facilities but I was sceptical about the idea. I heard nothing further on the subject.

Q. Supposing a producing company approaches you to produce a film about the reign of Akbar. I suppose there are enough materials to produce such films?

A. Yes. There are plenty.

Q. Do you think it will be interesting to the public to see these films?

A. I think so. Such films would appeal both to the East and the West.

Chairman: Both Akbar and Asoka?

A. Yes.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: Do you apply to Government for the production of films of that kind?

A. Beyond what I have stated, I have had nothing to do with the matter so far.

Q. You have not had to apply for funds or anything?

A. No.

Oral Evidence of the Rev. J. C. CHATTERJI, M.A., M.L.A., Principal, St. Stephen's High School, and Municipal Commissioner, Delhi, on Monday, the 20th February 1928.

Chairman: How long have you been connected with St. Stephen's High School?

A. About 18 years.

Q. So you have been here since the cinema came into this town?

A. Yes. I saw the first cinema coming in.

Mr. Green: Is the school connected with St. Stephen's College?

A. It is run by the same society. There is no other connection.

Chairman: Do your students go to the cinema?

A. Yes, I think a fairly large number of them see cinemas.

Q. Do you go yourself?

A. I go sometimes. I am not a very frequent visitor to the cinema but I go sometimes.

Q. In your opinion is the cinema having any effect on the public?

A. What I feel about it from the point of view of this city is, whether the municipality leases grounds to a cinema.....

Q. Do they own theatres?

A. No. It owns the land on which a large picture palace has been built. It seems to me that the country at large is not affected by the cinema at present. On the whole I do not think it is correct to say that the cinema makes any great impression on the people of India, when I compare this country with America and England. In those places every village has a cinema, and it has become a part of the life of the people in those countries to see pictures. The case is not so in this country. Except in cities like Bombay and Calcutta the cinema going population is infinitesimal. Since the habit is not really formed yet and since it has just begun to have a real effect, it is just the time to direct its growth into right channels.

Q. Do you think the films as shown now require any more attention than they are now receiving at the hands of the censors?

A. What I feel about this is, that after all the film has to cater to the peoples' tastes. And those who exhibit films are out for profit. Unless they are popular films they are not going to exhibit them. If you enforce on films stricter censorship the trade will suffer. Because people would not go to them.

Q. You think that stricter censorship is not necessary?

A. Not at present. But I think the public taste is getting educated. It is distinctly improving. For instance I will answer this question (No. 2). You ask us about the composition of an average cinema audience. I look upon it from the point of view of Delhi. The population of the place is 300,000 so that it is a fairly large town. I can say that 50 per cent. of the audience, except when there is a special film of a special kind, are illiterate and go to the 4 as. class. About 20 per cent. would be sort of clerks or people in similar jobs who come out after a hard day's work and who are fairly educated. I mean to say they are about the average citizens of this country. 10 to 15 per cent. will be school boys or children under 14. That is the composition at present of a cinema audience generally. After all the exhibitor has got to bring in films which appeal to an audience of that kind. So far as I know, the cinemas in Delhi have to bring in other attractions. Take the Elphinstone, the best here. It is owned by a very big company and they can afford to run it even at a loss. Even they have constantly to bring in other attractions, such as dances and other side shows.

Q. Do you mean to say that it does not pay?

A. I do not know whether any cinema really pays very well.

Q. You think that one should be careful in interfering with the growth of the cinema? Or at any rate you think that the industry has not come forward to such an extent that it will stand very much interference?

A. In this province the large number of films which have been stopped from being exhibited are rightly stopped, I think. There are various religious scruples here and films shown for instance in some other places had to be banned here simply because a certain community took objection.

Q. Are there many occasions of that sort?

A. I remember one film, viz., "The Ten Commandments". It was shown in Simla. I don't think there was anything particularly bad in it. It was run all over the world. Here it created tremendous trouble.

Q. Was it withdrawn?

A. The Muhammadans objected to it.

Q. Do you think it was a reasonable objection?

A. It is extremely difficult to answer that question. We have so many religious susceptibilities about the depiction of pictures here. There was another film "The Moon of Israel". It caused so much trouble that the authorities apprehended a serious breach of the peace.

Q. We heard about it from the police?

A. What I feel about this is, that Muhammadans have the distinct feeling that no sacred character should be shown on the screen.

Q. You refer to these to show that the industry is struggling under serious difficulties in this country?

A. Yes. And one should be careful of interfering too much with it. For the sake of the protection of the country's morals the stopping of sensational films which are largely from America would be good. Of course I mean films which bring in a very strong sex interest. I can also say that my students are advised not to go to see films like the ordinary American film that is exhibited in this country or the film which brings in a bravado spirit of criminality, such as bandits coming in, robbing people, etc. I think these are not fit for a country like India. In the western countries such things are taken more as fun and as a humorous sort of thing. But things of that kind are taken more seriously here. I say we cannot prevent little boys either here or in England when they see these films and try to act it.

Q. The police people have told us that they do not think that crimes have increased on account of seeing the cinemas?

A. I don't say that it has had any effect in increasing crimes. But it does have its effect on the intelligence of the growing generation. That is the whole trouble.

Q. Do you mean to say that school-boys should be barred from attending films which are open to adults?

A. How can we do that since there is hardly any film exhibited here which is specially meant for school-boys? Either it comes to this, viz., stop all boys from going to the cinema, or we have to make a regulation that no boys of a school or hostel should be allowed to go to a film unless it is an educational film.

Q. You think it is an impracticable thing so long as we don't get films prepared for children audiences?

A. Yes.

Q. It would not be a paying proposition to prepare films only for children?

A. Yes. Therefore the State will have to aid it. It will be extremely useful. Educational films ought to be produced and they have been produced to some extent. We have one or two good films. Unless the State aids this side of the industry it is impracticable. We cannot depend upon the trade for producing these films.

Q. You believe that the cinema can be used with advantage in supplementing education in schools?

A. Yes. Nothing can teach children in such a lucid way as cinemas. Some of the schools have got their own machines.

Q. Have you one?

A. No. Ordinarily schools cannot go in for a cinema machine. If I had the means I would certainly do it. We have magic lanterns. If there was any aid given to us I would go in for one.

Q. You consider that visual instruction is a very great advantage?

A. Yes.

Q. You feel the want of films and also the necessary apparatus?

A. Yes. A film on the work of the League of Nations can be sent out and these school-boys can be taught about the work carried on by the League of Nations Union. I think such a film would even pay. We showed a film here by name "Star of Hope". We got a school-boy audience each day of about 1,200 to 2,000. It was shown free because it was a gift. The place and the operators were also free. I think they learnt as much history by seeing it on the screen in one day, as would probably take them a month if they were to learn it otherwise.

Q. Do you think that the Indian film industry requires any help from Government?

A. Yes. It requires very much help. Because I think that on this side there will be a great opening in this country. It is practically non-existent now. I feel so for two reasons. The first is lack of capital forthcoming in that direction. People do not believe very much in the industry as the result of which they do not like to invest their money in it. The second point is paucity of suitable actors. Taking the "Light of Asia" I know the man who produced it. When he was trying to produce it here he came up to Delhi and met me. He asked me "How can I get lady actors? I can get a certain class of women who would be willing to act but that would mean ruining the chances of the film getting popular, because the class of women that I can get to act would not be the right class". He asked me whether I could get for him half-a-dozen Indian ladies to act either for pay or as honorary workers. He asked me if I could get hold of some school-mistresses and help him. He was quite prepared to pay something to the institution or for any other charity if he could get them. I wanted to help him, but I could not. Apparently he managed to get some from Bombay and other places. The Indian films that I have seen so far, except one or two, have not drawn any large audiences.

Q. Are they showing many Indian films in Delhi ordinarily?

A. They do show them sometimes.

Q. Do you think that if we were to open any vocational class to teach acting, photography and direction, it will attract students?

A. I think it will attract. From Delhi, more than one or two students have gone into that line. There is a man here. His name is Mr. Jagjit and he is in the Press Photo Service Company. He has always been doing something in that way. Whenever I talk to him he tells me that there is a lack of capital in this industry. It seems to me that the whole thing is this, viz., that after all it is a question of supply and demand. At present they are quite satisfied with the stuff they get—I mean western stuff. You have to create in them an interest for Indian films of good quality. When that interest is roused everything will be allright.

Q. As a member of the Legislative Assembly do you think that the Government should help it?

A. I think the Government should do its best to help it. They ought to do their utmost to encourage this industry. Indians are naturally gifted with powers of acting.

Q. You think public funds should be spent in that direction?

A. I think they should be spent in two directions. They should be spent in encouraging the industry as a whole and as a man engaged in educational work I also consider that we do want state aid to bring within the reach of the schools the benefits of the cinema.

Q. You mean educational films in a broad sense of the term—say films connected with Public Health, Hygiene, Geography and also historical films?

A. Yes. I think India can produce excellent films of this kind.

Q. Do you advocate the establishment of a Government studio for the production of such films?

A. I should rather like to advocate recognised producing agencies. I am not a strong believer in Government directly producing such things.

Q. The difficulty in this case will be to get agencies who are not otherwise busy themselves. There are some agencies in Bombay who are fully taken up with producing their own amusement films?

A. I would prefer private agencies—recognised by Government—to a Government studio.

Q. I suppose you know the chief difficulty that lies in the way of success of the Indian films is the lack of technique?

A. Yes.

Q. How would you improve that? Do you suggest to improve it by way of giving scholarships or would you be prepared to bring experts here?

A. I would do both. I would give scholarships for students to go out. Also in the initial stages we must import experts.

Q. If you feel that you should also import experts why should not the Government have a studio for producing their films. The experts employed might be used for the purpose of teaching?

A. It would be a good thing in the initial stages. As pioneer work let the Government have a studio. But I would not stick to it. In these things I have got more confidence in private agencies.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: You said that the industry should be directed along right channels. On that point I would like to know whether you do not think that this committee has come at the right moment?

A. I do think so and I welcome this committee as I said before. It has come here at the right time when the cinema habit has not fully grown in this country. It can now regulate the taste of the people by reasonable censorship and by introduction of educational and useful films.

Q. From your point of view, may I ask what recommendation this Committee should make?

A. I should not presume to do that myself.

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

A. I have. I believe posters sometimes are worse than the films themselves.

Q. You think they ought to be censored?

A. I cannot tell you how you will be able to censor them; but I have seen posters that are an absolute disgrace. Of course the films are being censored and naturally the disgraceful films are stopped, but the posters are not censored at all. I remember to have seen two or three extremely indecent posters.

Chairman: In the way of kissing, etc.?

A. I mean nude figures. I do not say I am hyper-sensitive in these matters, but I feel that sometimes these posters go too far. I should recommend that some sort of censorship of posters ought to be made.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: Do you think these films are harmful to the eyes of young children?

A. In some of the cinemas, yes.

Q. You mean the films are shaky and are therefore injurious to the eyes?

A. Yes and the lighting arrangements are bad, the audience is put somewhat too near. Most people generally go to the cheapest seats, especially children, and when they sit very near the screen, they cannot but seriously injure their eyes.

Q. Do you think boys and girls of eight or ten years should be prohibited from attending the cinemas?

A. It is not a practical proposition now; because there are hardly any films so far specially shown for children. But the moment they produce such films, we may prohibit children from attending the ordinary cinemas. I should personally like to stop children of a very young age from going; but the difficulty here is that, taking the general programme of a cinema show, there is so much good mixed up with bad that it is very difficult to say whether children should be stopped altogether from attending the shows.

Q. Have you come across any person or company producing films?

A. I was just telling the Chairman that I knew that missionaries...

Q. Do the missionaries produce such films?

A. They exhibit films of Indian life and the various activities of the people; but that is always a charity affair.

Q. Have you yourself seen such films?

A. I have not seen them, but they don't generally show them in this country.

Q. Why? Is it because Indians are shown in shady colours?

A. I cannot give an opinion on that.

Q. Any other films that you have seen?

A. From the Indian films that I have seen, I may say that they would not do much credit to Indians if they are shown in outside countries.

Chairman: In what respect?

A. In the way of acting, technique, etc.

Q. That is, they are not good?

A. They rank as very second-rate films.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: If our boys are sent abroad with scholarships, is there no fear of the trade secrets being not let out to them?

A. This sort of fear attaches to every industry; but I do not see why they should not make their way.

Q. Do you think it is worth while sending our boys to foreign countries; is it not a waste?

A. They should certainly be sent abroad. It won't be a waste.

Q. You have no outfit in your college?

A. No, we have got no cinema outfit. We have just sanctioned the purchase of a small cinematograph set for one of our residential schools.

Q. How much has been sanctioned for the purpose?

A. I think about a thousand rupees. We cannot afford to give more for this. I think for this amount we will be able to get a small machine for educational films.

Q. Do you think the cinema is better than the magic lantern?

A. Oh, yes.

Mr. Green: You talked about the difficulty of religious films. Would you personally object to a film which did not quite accurately represent the founder of the Christian religion?

A. Yes, certainly.

Q. I am not talking of anything irreverent?

A. Of course, if it is irreverent, I would certainly object to it.

Q. I only want to know if you would object merely because it was not accurate?

A. So long as the intention behind it is not wrong, I would have no objection to any kind of depiction.

Q. But would you recommend the censorship boards to be very meticulous, and to study deeply whether any particular action was historically or traditionally correct or not, as long as the general scheme of the film was not irreverent?

A. I think the people in the country will themselves take up the cudgels much more quickly if there is anything seriously inaccurate.

Q. But I suppose it is a very big problem for the censor, because he will deal with it first?

A. Certainly; but I think we need not trouble ourselves over it, because the people themselves will give the lead. Of course, we will have to be a bit careful in showing anything sacred to Mussalmans, but so far as Hindu mythology is concerned, I do not think we need put emphasis on that to the same extent. I personally would have no objection to anything, if due reverence is shown.

Oral Evidence of Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN, Advocate, and Senior Vice-President, Delhi Municipal Committee, on Monday, the 20th February 1928.

Chairman : I suppose you have resided a long time in Delhi?

A. Yes, I was born here.

Q. You go to the cinema much?

A. At times. I don't go very much.

Q. Have you seen cinemas outside Delhi?

A. Yes.

Q. So you are fairly familiar with the class of pictures which are shown?

A. Yes, generally.

Q. Have you seen any Indian films?

A. Yes.

Q. In Delhi or outside?

A. In Delhi, once in Lahore and several times in Mussoorie.

Q. Taking the western films, are you generally satisfied with their moral tone?

A. As a matter of fact, the customs in the West and in the East are entirely different and therefore what may be good in the West may not be appreciated in the East to that extent, at any rate in India. So far as the educated community is concerned, they are more or less familiar with western ideas, and they do not dislike them on the screen. On the whole, I would say that so far as the uneducated classes are concerned, they like them; although generally they do not take such lessons from what they see as they ought to.

Q. But they generally get amusement, and the cinema is intended as an amusement?

A. Of course yes; but unfortunately in India there are many who are not very heavily worked and they do not require any relaxation.

Q. But the illiterate classes work very hard and they require some amusement?

A. Certainly, they are hard-worked; but they require amusement only to a certain extent.

Q. Do you think the western films have any demoralising effect on the people?

A. I would not put that down as a general proposition. They may tend to demoralise the people to a certain extent, but they may also tend to improve them to a certain extent.

Q. You think the cinema does tend to improve their outlook on life?

A. Yes, it brightens their outlook. They will see new conditions, new views, etc., and they will see how people in other parts of the world live.

Q. In that way you think the cumulative effect is more for good than for anything bad?

A. On the whole, I think it has more educative effect than really any bad effect.

Q. I take it you think that the censorship is adequate so far as it goes?

A. So far as the present system is concerned, I am not against it; but if the idea is to appoint more censors and to have a stricter censorship, I would approve of it provided the local people are given their proper place on the boards.

Q. That is, you want more Indians to be on the board?

A. Yes.

Q. You think Indians are the best judges of what they require?

A. Yes, that is my view.

Q. Barring that, you are satisfied with the results of the censorship at present?

A. Yes, I think it is alright.

Q. Have you seen the "Moon of Israel"?

A. I did not see it myself; I heard something about it.

Sir Haroon Jaffer : Do you think objections will be raised by the Muhammadans if their religious films are produced?

A. The Mussalman or even probably a Hindu is more or less an orthodox man. But so far as the pictures are concerned, the Hindus do not so much feel for them as the Mussalmans do. Even as a child, the Mussalman is taught certain things and when once you inculcate those ideas into the child, naturally such ideas become rooted in the child when it grows older. The older type of Mussalmans do not generally approve of these pictures to the same extent as the educated Mussalmans. Personally speaking, I would not object to religious pictures, but I would not like pictures of prophets or persons who are held in high esteem by the Mussalmans, to be produced on the film.

Q. Suppose films are produced of the khalifas?

A. There ought to be no objection. I think. Probably, there will be some objection here and there; but it would not be so serious as in the case of a picture of the Prophet Mahomed being taken.

Chairman : Even if all good actions are taken?

A. My own idea is that the Mussalman will not have any objection to Christ's picture being shown, because Christ is an alien, although I know he is not; but if he sees the picture of his own prophet, I am sure he would not like it at all.

Q. But he would like to see good things in the prophet?

A. Unfortunately we are yet a backward community, and unless that backwardness is removed, it will be a bit difficult, I am afraid.

Q. Suppose the life of Mahomed is very beautifully shown?

A. Unfortunately a great deal of Muhammadans do not know the life of Mahomed, and yet they won't like his life to be put on the stage.

Q. Suppose we get a number of cultured Moulvis to write the life of Mahomed for the film and we exhibit it, do you think the Mussalmans will object?

A. I think they will; that is my reading of the Mussalman mind.

Sir Haroon Jaffer : Can you tell me any other subject disliked by the Mussalmans, I mean religious subjects?

A. I don't think they will object to Mecca, the Haj and things of that sort or even if you take the history of Egypt or the days when Mussalmans were the reigning power. I think they will approve of such things. If you take away religion and confine yourself to history, they will not disapprove of it. I also think that it will be very good to teach them history with the aid of films.

Q. Do you think there is any danger in showing films of battles, like the battle of Panipet, etc.?

A. Personally speaking, I do not think it will produce any harmful effect. There may be some who will not like it, and there may be a few who will go and see it from the point of view of history; but on the whole it would create a feeling which will not be wholesome.

Q. Do you think the municipality of Delhi can help in any way?

A. Talking from the municipal point of view, I think we could. But unfortunately, we are so situated just now that I don't think we will be able to allot much money for this purpose for some time to come. We have started this year compulsory primary education in about half the area of the city, which costs us nearly Rs. 3 lakhs. In a year's time we hope to practically cover the whole area. That means 4½ or 5 lakhs every year, and if that

amount is taken away from us for primary education and if we have no more income from other quarters, I am afraid it will not be possible for us to spend much on this. We have been trying to improve roads, but unfortunately the Government have not been helping us to the extent they ought to, especially considering that Delhi has become the capital now.

Q. Can you not spare some amount for the sake of mass education by means of these films?

A. If we have a bit more money at our disposal, I think we could do that.

Q. You can spare something from the money you have at present?

A. I do not think in the present circumstances it would be possible; but if we have more money, we should certainly like to spend some amount on education by means of films.

Q. Are any educative films being shown in the municipal schools here?

A. Not that I know of.

Mr. Neogy: Do you think it would be possible to find out from the local history any topics for films in order to bring about a better relation between Hindus and Muhammadans; for instance stories from Akbar's reign which may do some positive good?

A. Yes. I think that will be good. But if you go to Aurangzeb's period and show bad films, it will be very harmful.

Q. That is, a good deal of care should be taken in showing such stories?

A. Yes; that is true.

Q. Do you think that stories of the reign of Razia Begum would be acceptable to the Muhammadans?

A. I see no reason why it should not be acceptable to them, provided there is no communal tinge in it. If it is true to history I think it ought to be appreciated.

Q. We have received evidence absolutely to the contrary?

A. After all, I am talking for myself. I hold no brief for others. I have read also in the papers someone telling you that Mussalmans do not like seeing pictures and such things. My opinion is that it is not so. A Mussalman is not forbidden to see pictures as he is not forbidden to see other people's faces. It may not be permissible for him to keep pictures in his house—but that obviously is for entirely different reasons and not because you are not allowed to even look at a picture. Most of the educated Mussalmans now do keep pictures and I don't think they feel they are doing anything wrong. The Mussalmans will have no objection to seeing Hindu pictures just as the Hindus have no objection to seeing Muhammadan pictures.

Oral Evidence of Mr. S. WAHAJUDDIN, Inspector, S. P. C. A., Delhi, and Scenario-writer, on Tuesday, the 21st February 1928.

Chairman: You are a scenario-writer?

A. That is my hobby. I am the Inspector for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals in Delhi.

Q. Have you written any scenarios?

A. Yes, I have written 3 which I have sent to America and the copyright has been reserved. None has been sold so far.

Q. What do you mean by none sold so far?

A. They have been put on the market and they have been accepted by the Review in America. They have not been sold yet.

Q. You mean you have not got any return?

A. Yes.

Q. They are in the hands of the agents?

A. Yes.

Q. What sort of stories do you write?

A. I like stories depicting western life.

Q. You mean those that deal with social life there?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you know the names of the people by whom your scenarios were examined?

A. I forget the names.

Mr. Green: What do you mean by accepted?

A. In the Cinema review they collect stories from all amateur writers. These stories are placed before the companies that produce the films, to be selected by them at any time when they require.

Chairman: Have you any such review?

A. Yes.

Q. Have you got it here?

A. No, I have not brought it here.

Q. You do not write for the Indian producer?

A. No.

Q. You have not tried Indian stories?

A. There is nobody to encourage me to do that.

Q. Who encouraged you to send your stories to America?

A. There the market is better. There the stories are more readily accepted than in India.

Q. How do you know that?

A. Because I am a "Movie-fan."

Q. What do you mean by that?

A. I am a regular visitor of cinemas.

Q. For this do you get any free pass as the Secretary of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals?

A. No. I pay for the shows.

Q. What is it that you suggest as a scenario writer should be done? You have never attempted the Indian market?

A. No.

Q. You have attempted the American market and it still remains an attempt?

A. I think in India the actors must be trained either in America or in England.

Q. That is a separate matter. Have you got any Review of your attempts which you say were published in trade journals?

A. I refer to the Cinema Review of Washington.

Q. Are there other people who, like you, send stories to America from India?

A. Yes, there are.

Q. Do you know them?

A. Only some of them, but they are not in Delhi.

Q. And their attempts also are put in the Cinema Review?

A. Yes.

Q. In the Review do they give the full story?

A. The story is written by the scenario writer as a free lance would do it and those people who put it on the market write short stories to enable people to understand them.

- Q. How long now it is since your first attempt?
- A. About two years. I cannot get time now to write more. It was only as a hobby that I took to it.
- Q. Why don't you attempt it in India?
- A. I don't think they can buy scenarios for 3 or 4 years to come unless there are good producing facilities in India.
- Mr. Green: They pay Rs. 500 for scenarios in Bombay?
- A. Of course they may.
- Chairman: Can you not write some nice Muhammadan stories on the reign of Akbar?
- A. If I write a Muhammadan story I will write only for the Muhammadans.
- Q. It will not be applicable to all?
- A. No. Only the American style will appeal to the whole world.
- Q. Do you go to the cinema often?
- A. Yes.
- Q. What is your opinion about the effect of the cinema on the people?
- A. I think it is all very good. In fact I got more than half of my education from the cinema.
- Q. Your mental outlook was broadened?
- A. At least my English language has been improved on account of that.
- Q. Your English language?
- A. Exactly so. I was forced to read the English captions to understand the scene that follows. This is not the case when reading a book.
- Q. That was the way in which you improved your English?
- A. Yes.
- Q. You say the cinema has an influence for good both for the educated and the uneducated classes?
- A. Yes.
- Q. Has it any bad effect upon any class of people?
- A. It has sometimes. For instance if American films show anything against Hinduism or Muhammadanism they would wound the feelings of that particular community. In that sense it is bad.
- Q. Could you name any film which disturbed either the feelings of the Hindus or the Muhammadans?
- A. Yes.
- Q. Which was that?
- A. "The Ten Commandments."
- Q. Whose feelings did it disturb?
- A. Both the Hindus and the Muhammadans.
- Q. Here in Delhi?
- A. Yes and it was prohibited by the Government.
- Q. That is the only objection to the cinema?
- A. Yes.
- Q. On the whole you approve of the cinema and consider the censorship to be adequate?
- A. Yes.
- Q. Have you seen Indian films?
- A. A good number of them.
- Q. And they are popular with the people?
- A. They are not popular with the educated classes.
- Q. Do you like them yourself?

- A. No: whenever I went to see an Indian film I wasted my money. Indian films may be good to the foreigner as a piece of curiosity.
- Q. Your experience seems to have been unfortunate. How many of them have you seen?
- A. More than a dozen.
- Q. And were there not large crowds attending these shows?
- A. Yes, mostly illiterate people.
- Q. So the cinema-going people were pleased with them?
- A. Yes.
- Q. You say it does not appeal to the educated classes. Is it the want of technique or the story itself?
- A. The acting is very poor.
- Q. It is slow and not expressive enough?
- A. No. It lacks the technicalities from the artistic point of view.
- Q. Is there anything which you think you should tell us. If you have not thought about it leave it alone. We do not want to trouble you.
- Q. You think Indian films ought to be encouraged?
- A. Of course and improved especially for educational purposes.
- Sir Haroon Jaffer: Did you see the Indian film "Alibaba and the 40 Robbers" in India?
- A. No.
- Q. Have you read the "Thousand and One Nights"? Why don't you attempt to write from that book? Don't you think that will be interesting?
- A. They will be, if they are well produced.
- Q. Can't you write stories to suit the film?
- A. I have very little hope.
- Q. Did you write for the producing companies in Bombay?
- A. I even saw the people personally. They refuse. They have got their local scenario writers and they have more confidence in them.
- Q. They pay their men Rs. 1,000?
- A. May be.
- Q. Have you received any money from America?
- A. Not so far. The story is not sold yet.
- Q. What education have you got?
- A. I am a Matriculate.
- Q. On what subjects do you prepare these stories?
- A. I am fond of detective films.
- Q. What name do you give to the films?
- A. "Silver Grey" "Modern Joan of Arc".
- Q. Anything on the Indian side?
- A. Nothing.
- Q. All from western stories?
- A. No, all from my own ideas.
- Mr. Green: You have never been in Europe?
- A. Never.
- Q. Never left India?
- A. Never.
- Q. Where do you stage your scenarios, in America or Europe?
- A. America.
- Q. Have you ever thought of a scenario about western life with an Indian background?
- A. I am of course prepared if they encourage me.

Q. I suggest you know more about India than about America?

A. I can write better stories about India than America.

***Oral Evidence of Mr. B. D. GUPTA, Managing Proprietor, Regimental and Club Cinemas, Delhi, on Tuesday, the 21st February 1928.**

Chairman: You are the Manager of the Regimental and Club Cinemas in Delhi?

A. I am the proprietor of 4 cinemas in Delhi, 2 in Raisina and one in New Cantonment and one in Kings Way.

Q. Do the general public visit your cinemas?

A. No, they are confined to the Regimental and the Club Members, respectively. The Regimental cinema is exclusively intended for the use of Military troops.

Q. To whom do the buildings belong?

A. They belong to Government.

Q. And the Club cinemas also?

A. The Club cinemas belong to the club buildings.

Q. Have you entered into a contract with them?

A. Yes, by general agreement.

Q. Where do you get your films from?

A. I am an importer myself. I get my films from America, Germany and England.

Q. How many films do you generally import in a year?

A. I imported 26 pictures last year.

Q. You only show them in your cinema houses, I suppose?

A. I also hire them out to exhibitors in several parts of India, Burma and Ceylon.

Q. How often in a week do you show pictures in your cinemas?

A. In the Club cinemas I show twice a week and in the Regimental cinema we are showing daily except one day in a week.

Q. I suppose they are all British soldiers who visit the Regimental cinema and there are no Indian soldiers there?

A. They are all British soldiers.

Q. And I suppose the Raisina club is a European club?

A. I think there are Indian members also there, but in the Raisina Club cinemas, only club members are allowed to see.

Q. And members of their family are also allowed to see the cinemas there, I suppose?

A. Yes.

Q. What is the arrangement between you and the Raisina Club?

A. In the club cinemas, the club authorities themselves manage the cinema there but they pay me a certain proportion of the collections. But in the Regimental cinema I have got the ticket system and I make my own collections.

Q. I suppose in all these cinemas you show only foreign films, I mean imported films?

A. Yes. I don't deal in Indian films at all.

Q. What sort of Western films do you show, are they feature films?

A. Mostly, feature films and comedies.

Q. Which kind of pictures are most popular there?

A. Comedy films are the most popular features of the day.

Q. Those who visit your cinemas, are they satisfied with the pictures shown?

A. I am trying to keep them satisfied, but I cannot say whether all of them are satisfied with the pictures shown.

Q. Till now nobody has expressed any dissatisfaction? You have not heard any complaints at all?

A. I have not heard any complaints.

Q. Can you tell us how many of the 26 programmes which you imported last year were from America?

A. I got only one picture from England, two from Germany and all the rest were from America.

Q. Do you get your pictures through England?

A. No, I import them direct.

Q. Can you mention the name of the English picture which you imported?

A. It was a Hepworth production. I don't remember the name of the film.

Q. Was it a drama or a serial or what?

A. It was a drama. I may tell you that comedy pictures from any other country other than America are not good and are not appreciated. American comedies are really the best.

Q. For how many years have you been running these cinemas in Delhi?

A. Ever since 1923. I was at Bombay before that period.

Q. Were you an exhibitor at Bombay?

A. I was the Manager for K. D. and Brothers, which went into liquidation afterwards.

Q. So, you learnt your work there?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you find any difficulty in getting the films you want?

A. Yes, I do experience difficulties sometimes, because the taste of the general cinema going public is improving every day and I cannot get exactly what I want. We are not able to see what the pictures really are. We have to judge them from the literature and synopsis about each film and the pictures are really not the same as the literature would seem to suggest. The literature and other advertisement matter are as a rule mere exaggerations.

Mr. Green: Yes, I agree.

Chairman: Do you find your business paying?

A. It has not paid me up till now. Of course, in the beginning we have to spend much to earn a name. Ultimately it might or it might not pay. I can't say.

Q. When you rent out these pictures do you do it on the percentage basis or do you hire out on fixed rents?

A. I generally try to lend my pictures on the fixed rent basis, but sometimes, as the competition is very keen, I have to yield to the terms of the exhibitors and lend them my pictures on the percentage basis.

Q. How many British pictures have you bought altogether till now?

A. British pictures don't pay at all.

Q. Why, are they more costly?

A. British pictures which are really good are produced at an enormous cost and I cannot afford to purchase them at all.

Q. Most of the English people would like to see a picture like "Mons"?

A. The other day I showed the same picture at the Gymkhana club and high class officers who saw it appreciated it much, but when I showed the

same film at the New Delhi Club, people there did not like it at all. Because it was a War picture they did not like it.

Q. They only like comedies, is it?

A. They don't want to see social dramas or love affairs. They want comedians like Charlie Chaplin, Harold Lloyd, Jackie Coogan, Douglas Fairbanks and other popular actors. They want something new and not the old fashioned films.

Q. Do you import second hand films?

A. No.

Q. What is the average price you pay for a film?

A. About Rs. 3,000 for an ordinary class film in 5 reels or so. My idea is to go in for extraordinarily good pictures hereafter.

Q. What is the highest price you have ever paid for a picture which you have imported?

A. I have paid between Rs. 4,000 and Rs. 5,000.

Q. What was that film?

A. It was a Metro picture named "Lantern" which I got from the Royal Opera House, Calcutta.

Q. Did you realise the money which you spent on that picture?

A. Sometimes, we don't purchase these pictures in the belief that we would be able to realise all the money that we have invested. We go in for good pictures simply to build up our reputation, in the first instance.

Q. So you are now building up your business?

A. Yes.

Q. You don't pay any rent for the cinema houses where you show your pictures?

A. Of course, I do.

Q. What rent do you pay?

A. In the Club cinemas, as I already told you, I am paid a certain proportion of the proceeds. But in the Regimental I pay Rs. 30 per month as rent and in the New Cantonment I pay Rs. 22-8 per mensem.

Q. What is the lowest price you charge?

A. It is all a uniform rate of 8 annas per seat.

Q. There is no distinction between an Officer and the ordinary soldier?

A. No, there is no difference. There is only one class. In the Club cinema we charge one rupee per seat.

Q. Even though you charge such a high rate it does not pay you, you say?

A. No, it does not.

Mr. Haroon Jaffer: What audience do you generally get on the average in the Regimental cinema?

A. It is very difficult to strike the average. These soldiers are generally paid weekly and on the days they are paid we get a good house and the attendance is gradually on the wane as the week draws to its end and on the last day practically we don't get any collection at all.

Chairman: Do you put on the same show throughout the week?

A. No, we change it every two days.

Q. Then how is it you managed with only 26 pictures last year?

A. I get pictures from other dealers also sometimes.

Mr. Green: Where do you get your imported films censored?

A. In Bombay or in Calcutta.

Q. Do you import through both ports?

A. I get my films sent to me direct by post. If I get my film booked through Bombay then I censor it at Bombay.

Q. Don't you show your films first here?

A. No.

Q. Have you any grievances against the present censorship?

A. I am not importing that class of pictures where I have a grievance against the censors. Others might have grievances against the censors.

Q. Have you had any personal grievances against the censors in general?

A. I have not had any difficulties because I did not import any such films.

Q. So you have not had any trouble about your own importations?

A. Not at all. If I had imported serials and such other pictures then there would have been some trouble.

Q. Has it been of great inconvenience to you to have to send your films 800 or 1,000 miles away to have them censored?

A. When I first came here in 1923 I had a talk with the Chief Commissioner on that subject and I suggested to him the advisability of having a film Censorship Board established here in Delhi and I also assured him that from the financial point of view also the Government won't be losers because if a Board were established at Lahore or Delhi it would have been very useful for exhibitors in Northern India generally. He advised me to move the Government in the matter and if they approved of that suggestion then he would have no objection whatsoever in the matter.

Q. Do you send out your films to be censored as soon as you receive them by post?

A. I send it to the cinema man who books my film and he gets the same censored at his place. Of course I incur the cost of sending the pictures to my clients.

Q. You have not found any difficulty?

A. Of course it is difficult to send the film to Bombay and Calcutta. Sometimes our clientele say that the films were not censored and so saying our films are kept waiting for months and months sometimes.

Chairman: Why don't you censor your films at Bombay?

Mr. Green: Can't you get somebody to represent you at places where your films are censored?

A. These people misuse the privileges given to them sometimes.

Q. I can quite understand your difficulty.

Chairman: But now you send it to the exhibitor and he gets the film censored I suppose?

A. Yes. I take the risk.

Mr. Green: Your fear is that your exhibitors sometimes use the films for longer periods than they are entitled to?

A. That is so. I can't do anything in the matter, because there is no proof. There are some small cinema houses who don't even publish handbills or have any notices and we have to deal with such people also.

Q. You know recently a Censorship Board has been formed in Lahore?

A. No. I don't know that. I have not been told anything about it.

Q. Which will you prefer, to have your films censored in Bombay or in Lahore?

A. I would prefer Lahore. In Northern India we have many more clients than in Southern India. Cinemas in Southern India are more than satisfied with the dealers in Bombay and Madras, and so they rest content with the Censorship Boards in Bombay and Calcutta. Charges for programmes for small classes of cinemas are practically the same. The question is why should they pay more for their films when they could get their supply from a nearer station.

Q. Then why don't you send your films to Lahore for having them censored?

A. As I told you I did not know about it.

Q. I presume, if you send your films to Lahore you will have to appoint an agent there?

A. I have a cinema there where I send my films permanently. In this case I can count the number of days the films are retained and I can know what exactly happens.

Q. Supposing they say it will take about 2 weeks to get the film censored?

A. I will have to take the risk.

Sir Haroon Jaffer : How do you pay your import duty?

A. I pay it by post.

Q. How do they calculate it, how do they know it?

A. They send for the invoice and they hold up the film at the Customs.

Q. Do you think it will be better to increase the import duty?

A. In 1920 or 1921 Government increased the duty by 30 per cent. but next year when they found it was a loss to them they reduced the percentage by 15.

Mr. Green : They charge on the Royalty?

A. But it is not the price of the film. Customs duty is levied on the cost of the film and not on Royalty.

Q. No, it is not.

Sir Haroon Jaffer : Do you find any difficulty with Madans?

A. No.

Q. Their monopoly does not come in your way?

A. No. On the other hand it will be a very difficult thing for Madans to manage their whole lot. Whatever they have got at the present time, they must manage and they will find it to be a very difficult thing.

Q. The Northern India exhibitors get the films from here?

A. Yes. They also hire from this place.

Q. You think that there ought to be a Board in Delhi?

A. Of course I do think that. I would like to have it here.

Chairman : Every town would like to have it?

A. Only the central place should have it.

Mr. Green : How many central places are there to be in India?

A. At least one in the whole province.

Sir Haroon Jaffer : Suppose you are given the contract to show films to Indian troops. How will you manage it?

A. I will manage according to their wishes. I will cater for them with whatever class of pictures they want.

Q. Supposing they want Indian films? Will you be able to get Indian films?

A. They don't want Indian films.

Q. You mean Indian troops?

A. Yes. I know their taste and they do not want Indian films.

Q. You are sure about it?

A. Yes.

Q. You get your posters too from America?

A. Yes.

Q. What about handbills?

A. I print them here.

Chairman : How do you make your handbills?

A. You will see that from the list. I take out the important portion of the synopsis and print it here myself.

Sir Haroon Jaffer : Have you had occasions to have pirated copies of films?

A. Myself, never.

Q. Anybody else?

A. Many are doing it.

Chairman : Is it very common?

A. Very very common.

Mr. Green : Are you speaking from personal knowledge?

A. Yes. I know this business from 1916.

Sir Haroon Jaffer : Do you get copies of your films also?

A. If I want to I do.

Q. You have to pay the same duty?

A. Yes. I have always to pay the same duty.

Mr. Green : You told us that no film cost more than 4 as. a foot. But you told us that you ordinarily pay Rs. 3,000 for 5 reels.

A. That includes the Royalty also.

Q. Even then Rs. 3,000 for 5,000 feet works out at the rate of 9 or 9½ annas per foot?

A. The cost of the film itself is never more than 4 annas.

Q. You mean cost of the raw material? I mean what you call the invoice cost?

A. Up till now we have never gone into these bills. Because Government charges us at the rate of 4 annas we don't care to go into these things. If the charge were to be on the valuation of the film and not on the Royalty of the pictures, then we can go and ask for separate invoices. Now we don't ask for separate invoices for the print and for the Royalties. In the other case we would do that.

*Oral Evidence of Mr. B. DAS, M.L.A., on Wednesday, the 22nd February 1928.

Chairman : Your headquarters are at Cuttack?

A. Yes.

Q. Are there any cinemas in Cuttack?

A. Yes. There are 4 or 5 cinemas. Everybody who has got a little money is starting a cinema show. The students go in very large numbers to see these cinemas.

Q. What films are shown there? Are they all western films or are there any Indian films also?

A. I think they are western films. I saw only one film there and that was "The Thief of Baghdad".

Q. Did you see only that film there?

A. That was the only thing that I saw at Cuttack. I don't see many films now.

Q. Do many people go to these cinemas?

A. It is only during the last 3 years that cinema-going has become a habit. There are one or two cinemas in Patna itself.

Q. What are the other towns in Bihar and Orissa that have cinemas?

A. I cannot say. The cinema is not so very prevalent in Bihar and Orissa as it is in Bombay and Calcutta.

Q. I suppose there is no production of films in Bihar and Orissa?

A. No.

Q. Are there any Indian theatres in Bihar and Orissa?

A. There are some. The people of Orissa are fond of the stage. They take part in dramas, just as they do in Bengal. They have got the village fairs where the people take part and act. But here we have not so much. The Bengalis are more anglicised than the people in Bihar and Orissa.

Q. Do you think, as a public man, that the Indian Film Industry should be encouraged?

A. I should think so. For the national existence, Indian Film Industry should be encouraged.

Q. You consider that as an amusement for the people?

A. Yes. For the national honour the film industry should be national; because the non-national subjects, be it western or Indian, do not cater to the national inclinations of Indians.

Q. You mean that many western films create praise for western nations?

A. Yes. And I think they have introduced crimes also in this country. My idea about this matter is that all the recent railway crimes that took place on the G. I. P. Railway and the E. I. R., in which the Anglo-Indians took part, are due to the cinema. There were a lot of burglaries and I consider them to be the effect of the cinema, because you often see similar things in the cinema.

Q. You know I suppose that the police people do not believe in it?

A. The police are entitled to hold their view.

Q. You fear that these might be due to cinema films?

A. I am also of opinion that all these accidents on the E. I. R., are due to the cinema. Anyway, these are encouraged by these cinema films, which are mostly western.

Q. My recollection is that this derailing of trains took place even some 20 years ago.

A. Some 2 or 3 years ago there was an accident of derailment which was the worst.

Q. That might be one incident?

A. The Anglo-Indian community as a whole are very ill-educated. They have got a general inclination to do these things and by seeing these emotional western films they are encouraged.

Mr. Green: It is a new suggestion that you are making that any particular community is affected by these films.

A. The criminal inclinations of that community.....

Q. Are you not stating two things now? One is that the community is criminal and the other is that the effect is greater on that community. Is it not rather insulting?

A. It is my view that that community is more criminally inclined. I am entitled to express my view.

Q. But I am entitled at the same time to examine you in whatever way I like.

Chairman: You say you had been in Bombay two years ago?

A. I left it 1½ years ago.

Q. From your experience of the cinema, do you think it has any pernicious influence on the people of the country?

A. These western sex films and emotional films in India have that effect. They do not suit our national characteristics. The young generation become mad of these films. I don't know how they become like that but I will quote you one little instance: in those days when I was a bachelor my servants used to look me up and then go to the cinema.

Q. Don't you recognise that seeing conditions of life in other countries, the standard of living, the standard of comfort and all the modern contrivances, broadens the outlook of the people who go there?

A. On that point I have a definite view. I am not against the cinema. In the Assembly when discussing this—I don't know how we took up the matter—it was mentioned that this is a censure on the American films.

Q. Yes. I know that. We don't want to censure American films. You take it on general grounds.

A. I am against crime films being shown. I am also against emotional and sex films. I do not mind amusement films, comics, scenery films, etc. The Indian mind is always ready to welcome classic films but they cannot allow their national honour and sentiment to be wounded.

Q. You think many of these western films do positive injury to the Indian public?

A. I have seen some of the western crime films and sex films in England where the rates are cheap. They do deteriorate the minds of the young. I don't want the incidents which happened in America to be repeated in India. A son four years old, in America, shot his mother with a pistol and when asked he said he would do it again. I think that frame of mind was due to too much cinema display. If that is done too much in India, I am afraid our children may, in the same way, grow disloyal.

Q. So you consider that the censorship in these matters should be strict?

A. Yes. I would say that there should be one central board for western films.

Q. Then you will have to have only one port of entry for the western films?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you think a central board can be located in Bombay?

A. I do not mind if it is located in Bombay or Calcutta or Madras or Delhi.

Q. But Delhi is far away from the sea?

A. I do not mind if you locate it in Bombay or Calcutta; but there should be a majority of Indians representing national India. Regarding Indian manufactured films, I am of opinion that there should be at least five local boards,—one in Bombay, one in Calcutta, one in Madras, one in Delhi and one in Burma,—because there may be language difficulty in all these places and the customs may be quite different.

Q. Moreover, it will be difficult for the producers to take them to far-off places?

A. Quite so. In Bombay once the "Bombay Chronicle" wrote when the film "Jaidev" was shown, that it would very difficult for the people in Bombay to understand it. "Jaidev" was a Bengali poet. I have lived in Bombay and I know the life of the Bombay people is quite different from that of the Bengalis. I have also seen the Bengali stage and the Bombay stage. They are entirely different. The Bengali stage is more up-to-date and is quite different from the Bombay stage. In the Bombay stage there is something unnatural which you don't see in the Bengali stage. So I say that local films should be suited to the national temperament in the particular part of the country where they are shown.

Q. You mean the Bengali drama is more akin to the British drama?

A. It is more natural I say. They don't exaggerate things there. That is why I say, the national temperament being such, there should be some difference in the local settings.

Q. What are your views on questions Nos. 22 and 23, that is with regard to Imperial preference?

A. In my public life I have always said that I am against Imperial preference. I think that no preference should be shown to any part of the Empire. I have consistently been against it. I won't have any quarrel with France or America or Italy or any other country. Even in English cinemas I have seen the best films coming from France.

Mr. Green: And from Germany?

A: I do not recollect if I have seen any German films.

Chairman: But what is your view?

A: I think it is a question that ought to be decided on merit only.

Q: But don't you want to have films showing conditions in the various parts of the Empire?

A: If there are some educative films, I won't mind. If a film is good and quite true to life, I would have no objection.

Q: That is so far as amusement films are concerned; but so far as educational films are concerned, have you any objection to the interchange of films between the various parts of the Empire?

A: I don't think the Government ought to interfere in this respect. As an Indian, I don't boycott anything manufactured in Australia. I take every morning Australian jam because it is better than any other variety. Why have any Empire preference at all? That will be unnecessarily introducing a new system.

Q: Take for instance the agricultural methods adopted in Canada or the methods of fruit cultivation in South Africa. Don't you think it will be advantageous to have films on such topics shown to the people here?

A: Do you mean that the different Local Governments will establish their own cinema houses?

Q: No; there will be a library where these films will be gathered together to be lent out to exhibitors for exhibition?

A: That means that the Government should invest a certain sum of money.

Q: Assuming they do so, what is your view?

A: If that is to be done for the purpose of encouraging the Indian industry, especially for educative purposes, then it is all right. But I say it must not be done with the specific purpose of giving any Imperial preference.

Q: Your view is that so long as it does not tend to show any preference and so long as reciprocal arrangements can be made which will be of advantage to our country, such a course may be resorted to?

A: Yes; that will be decidedly good; but I have not so far known if Government were willing to spend any money on this.

Q: That is why I put you the question, whether we should recommend that Government should spend some money on this. These things will add to the knowledge of the people. For instance, if the conditions in which workers and labourers are housed, how they work, how orderly they are, if all these things are shown, the people will certainly be benefited?

A: If the Government want to do that, they can bring the films from all parts of the world, not only from the different parts of the Empire. At any rate, the Government may make an effort in that direction, wherever such films are likely to be useful; but if such things are confined to the countries in the Empire, we will very strongly oppose it.

Q: Don't you think it is right that we should know the conditions in the other parts of the Empire to which we belong?

A: The educated and enlightened Indians will certainly try to know them.

Q: But what about the people who are not educated? Even we who have not travelled abroad don't know the conditions in other countries?

A: The national income, the *per capita* income of an individual in India, is between Rs. 20 and Rs. 30 and so how can we afford to pay more money for this purpose. If it is a question of spending for social amusement, I don't think we can spend more.

Q: But don't you think it is better to spend money on amusement than to spend it on liquor or to spend the time in conspiring to commit crime and all that?

A: I think most of the cinema-goers are the students and the city clerks; they go there with their mothers and wives and children and they spend a certain amount of money there.

Q: Then you are arguing against the cinema altogether?

A: There should be cinemas, but cinema-going ought not to be encouraged, in my opinion.

Mr. Green: Then we can as well recommend the stoppage of this industry altogether?

A: Your recommendation will not matter much, because there are certain capitalists who have got to invest their money on something.

Chairman: I suppose you believe in the cinema, that is, in using the film for mass education on general subjects such as public health, industries, modern methods of cultivation, etc.?

A: Yes, generally for mass education.

Q: Do you think Government should spend money in producing such films or in bringing such films from outside?

A: The Local Governments have to do so much in the matter of education.

Q: Don't you think there is so much illiteracy that visual instruction will add to the productive capacity of the individual?

A: It might; if you are going to do that, I won't object.

Q: My question was whether Government should spend funds in order to produce such films or to bring such films into India?

A: If by the exhibition of such films there is not going to be any additional burden on the masses, I would never object to it.

Q: You mean that such exhibition should be free, so as to attract all people?

A: Yes, free, just like the railway demonstrations. I would approve of that, provided it does not touch the pockets of the masses.

Colonel Crawford: You want strict censorship for the reason that you are afraid that the cinema will have a demoralising effect. On what do you base your opinion? Have you any definite evidence?

A: I base it on my own personal experience. Before I went to England, I never saw a cinema film; but during my stay in England I saw many of these emotional films. You know the Indian social life is quite different from the western social life. Naturally when I saw those emotional films, there was a mental and moral fall in me, even in my own estimation. I felt a bit impulsive and emotional. What is natural to the West is not natural to the East.

Q: But would you not equally get that emotion or impulse if you read a novel?

A: The Indian drama and the Western drama are quite different. I used to go to the Western dramas once a week, but I found that the dramas had not such a bad influence as the cinema.

Q: Even taking the fact that you felt a bit emotional on seeing the film on the screen, has it had any bad effect on you at all?

A: I said it had. I felt it—I won't say if it had morally deteriorated me—but I think it had a demoralising effect.

Q: You are judging only from your own experience?

A: Yes. In Bombay and in Calcutta I found that the percentage of students who failed in the examination was large and I heard that the students spent most of their time in going to the cinemas. I will tell you something more. The Indian boy is not ordinarily sentimental; but on seeing the cinemas, some of them are beginning to be a bit sentimental nowadays. I object to these kissing and hugging pictures being exhibited in the cinemas. You can even define that the kissing should be only for one second or some such thing. But kissing for 30 seconds or even one

minute is not proper I think. It affects every man who sees the film. For instance, if I take my wife and children to see these kissing scenes, I have, generally, to hang my head. Of course, I had a different experience when I saw such scenes outside India, because the very atmosphere was different. But here in my own Indian atmosphere, I don't like the exhibition of such scenes.

Q. I quite agree with you in your view as regards the exhibition of western films; I also agree that you cannot force the public to give preference to any particular film. But at the same time, do you desire that India should have the best films, no matter what the country of their origin is? If you want to see the best pictures of the world, you must get them from France or Germany and other Western countries?

A. But the best films may also be made here with oriental characters in them.

Q. Then if we were to find that there is a tendency on the part of any one country to monopolise the trade in this country to the detriment of the other countries, what steps would you suggest should be taken?

A. I think it is purely a commercial matter. How can I answer that?

Q. Suppose a particular agency takes up all the theatres in this country,—that is not an impracticable proposition,—or suppose two or three agencies combine together and take all the theatres in the country solely for the purpose of providing a market for their local productions? Do you think it is a proper procedure?

A. If that is done with a specific purpose, I think the Government should control that when the time comes. I don't think such a time will ever occur in India, when our amusement theatres are to be monopolised by any one agency.

Q. I only suggest that; we have been told during our examination of witnesses that such a position might arise, and it would better to take cognisance of that?

A. I think a strong central board of censors will be up to the position.

Chairman: It is not a question of a board of censors. Some one agency might get control of all the theatres in the country. Don't you think it is a possibility?

A. In my opinion, there is no such possibility.

Mr. Green: I do not quite understand whether you go to the cinema yourself often?

A. Not very often; I go very seldom.

Q. During the last two or three years?

A. I might have gone occasionally; but not very often.

Q. Then you are not aware whether the standard of films exhibited in this country has improved or not?

A. Everywhere the film is improving, I think. For instance, if we go to the Excelsior in Bombay, we see there better pictures than elsewhere.

Q. How can you give any such definite views when you are not in close touch with the cinema?

A. I am a public man who moves with the people; I may not be in touch with the cinema itself; but I am in touch with the people who frequent the cinema.

Q. That is why my first question was whether you go to the cinema yourself often?

A. During the last one and a half years I might not have gone often. When a man reaches a certain stage in life, he does not find much time to go to the cinema.

Mr. Green: Then it comes to this: "All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy". I think anyway a man ought to have some amusement. (Laughter.)

Oral Evidence of Mr. N. C. KELKAR, B.A., LL.B., M.L.A., at Delhi, on Wednesday, the 22nd February 1928.

Chairman: Mr. Kelkar, I know you are a great dramatist.

A. I do not know if I am a great dramatist; but I have written about six plays.

Q. I understand you have written scenarios for films?

A. Only one was put on the film. It was called "The Pretender". It was an Indian History scene. That is, a man pretended that he was Sadasiva Rao, Peishwa, who died on the battlefield of Panipat. He was kept in confinement for a number of years and then proved to be a false person and then killed. That is the story.

Q. How long is it since it was filmed?

A. About two years. The drama was written about 14 or 15 years ago.

Q. Who wrote the scenario for the film?

A. Partly myself and partly the director.

Q. Which company produced it?

A. I do not exactly remember the name; but it was some Deccan company in Poona.

Q. Is there a producing company in Poona?

A. Yes; they have a plant in Poona for producing films. I do not know whether it exists now or not, but it did exist a year ago.

Q. Did you approve of the production?

A. Not entirely. If I had my own way, I might have done it better in some ways. Of course I do not know the art myself; but I could say, however, which is wrong and which is right.

Q. Do you think there is considerable scope for Indian films in this country?

A. Yes, I think so, certainly.

Q. I suppose you have seen Indian films now and then?

A. Yes.

Q. Both in Poona and in Bombay?

A. Yes.

Q. Bombay is the place where they produce films most?

A. Yes. The same films go practically all over the country.

Q. Especially in Madras the Bombay films are very popular. Do you think anything should be done by the Government to encourage this industry?

A. I would like Government to give aid only with regard to educational films and industrial films and to no others. Purely undisputed public utility films should be patronised by the Government. They may be given a subsidy or bounty; but the other kinds of films should be left to private enterprise altogether.

Q. Are you satisfied with the technique of the films which you see?

A. Our Indian people have to learn so many things; but in some cases I have seen that if they touch a particular vein of psychology, their films draw larger houses than any western films.

Q. Do you think scholarships should be given to deserving people to go and get training abroad?

A. So much the better.

Q. Would you advise such a step being taken in order to improve the technique of Indian films?

A. Yes; it will be just like the industrial scholarships.

Q. In order to encourage the growth of good films, would you approve of any prizes being awarded or any bonus being paid to the producer of a good film?

- A. I won't travel beyond the line of educational films.
- Q. I suppose you know the people who are concerned with the production of films in Bombay?
- A. Yes.
- Q. Do you think the production is in the hands of satisfactory individuals?
- A. Some of the artists are talented people and they produce fairly good films.
- Q. But is there any effort at improving the industry?
- A. It is improving slowly as the producers are gaining experience. They started this business only a few years ago, I mean our own indigenous companies were started a few years ago. They did not exist before that. One thing I am sure about; that is that there is a certain amount of talent available; and if the technique at present is not up to the mark, it is a question of equipment, capital and so on, which they greatly lack.
- Q. As regards the public utility films, that is, the educational films, the propaganda, or public health films, etc., do you think that Government ought to encourage their production?
- A. Yes, by giving bounties, if necessary.
- Q. What is your view as regards the Government themselves starting a studio or studios, so that the experts employed there may be available for the production of films?
- A. I am entirely against it. It should be left entirely to private enterprise.
- Q. But if private enterprise is too busy with producing only amusement films?
- A. Therefore I suggest that a substantial bounty should be given for real public utility films; so that the Government will understand what the public wants and there may be encouragement in this way. At present, they do not go in for such films, because they do not pay.
- Q. It would not be a paying proposition? I do not know when the time will come when it will become a paying proposition; but as it is, it is not a paying proposition to those who produce the educational films?
- A. If there are some films which may be taken as model ones, then I am sure people will have an inducement to get more.
- Q. Have you any great objection to Government pioneering in that direction, say for a short while?
- A. I do not want Government to touch the industry at all.
- Q. You think Government should only encourage private enterprise by giving orders?
- A. Yes.
- Q. What is your opinion about the effect of the western films on the people?
- A. I would say that the effect is not what I would desire. I would classify the western films. The educational and the industrial films I would welcome. Films relating to adventure and romance and those which depict some such things which are not desirable, even those I would allow; because after all, a man takes romance for what it is worth and he takes only that sort of romance from the film which he takes from the books. But in the case of social-life films, it is quite different. Even there I have seen very excellent western social films which teach social life and morals and liberal ideas to those who see them. If we take the ordinary social life in the east and that in the west, they are entirely different. I do not say there is any difference from an ethical standpoint; there is nothing ethical about this or unethical about the other. But in western social life, things are done in a way far different from the way in which they are done in India; and in that way the mischief is done, as all people, men and women, young and old and even children go to the theatres and see such western social

life, which is not prevalent in this country. That is the trouble. I would have no objection to any kind of western films except these social-life films.

Q. You mean those relating to the relations between the sexes?

A. Yes. I mean kissing and openly embracing in the presence of people. They may not be objectionable in English society, nor do they indicate a low standard of morals or ethics. They are not however sanctioned or approved of in Indian social life, and therefore they naturally have a very bad effect upon young minds.

Q. As an observer of the young people in the country you think it has a bad effect?

A. It has, from that point of view.

Q. You think exaggerated notions are entertained about life in the West?

A. I think so.

Q. You therefore think that something must be done to restrict that class of films?

A. Yes.

Q. Would you ban them altogether or would you omit only such scenes?

A. I think only particular scenes should be omitted.

Q. Such as nudity, hugging, kissing, these you would avoid?

A. Yes.

Q. Would you like to adopt such a rule as they have in Japan?

A. What is the rule, I don't know it.

Q. No kissing is allowed on the lips. I saw it in a Japanese book. They do not allow any film to be exhibited which allows kissing on the lips. Would you advise such a thing for India?

A. Under the Penal Code there are sections applicable to these. But no one has put the Penal Code to the test in this respect by bringing evidence or pronouncing judgment on it. I think you could do this through the Censor if you like. Prevention is better than subsequent measures.

Q. You think there is the possibility of danger to the youth of the country?

A. So great a possibility that we should take action. I will tell you why. With regard to the drama for instance there is also Censorship in existence. The drama, so far as my province is concerned, sanctioned by one District Magistrate in one district has again to be submitted to the District Magistrate of another district if it is to be staged there.

Q. Under what law?

A. I think it is under the Dramatic Performances Act, and that causes trouble. But if a censorship is there and it is properly exercised I should think it will be good.

Q. You think the tendency for such class of films is now decreasing?

A. It is rather increasing, and I think Government should take action promptly.

Q. Of course you know the industry is in its infancy in our country, there are very few cinema houses and the population going to the cinema is very small.

A. It has already become a craze, for instance, in Poona.

Q. You therefore think it would be wise to introduce such restrictions, restrictions which may perhaps injure the trade?

A. I don't mind injuring the trade. I think the trade should not injure social life. If it injures social life it is not trade.

Q. If it has not injured social life already, it is likely to injure it?

A. I think so.

Mr. Green: I think so far as social films are concerned, you want the censorship to be a little stricter?

A. Yes, from the point of view of kissing.

Q. You are not frightened that that kind of films will have any demoralising or denationalising effect?

A. No. In social life the film must exhibit conditions that one can understand and appreciate. There is a point beyond which the film should not go. Up to that point exhibition of different kinds of social life would be permissible.

Q. Certain witnesses have suggested to us that the scenes of European or American houses differ

A. It is absurd. I do not agree. I should say it improves their outlook and, without taking a trip to England, one could have an idea of English houses as they are depicted in Poona cinema houses. I would like that.

Q. How would you limit it?

A. I have tried to fix the limits as low as possible when I say I would not mind adventures and romances being exhibited because people would take them at their face value. But when a film pretends to depict actual social life it is quite different.

Chairman: From that point of view you think that the censorship should be more in the hands of Indians?

A. I think so. Not only that. There is a Board at Bombay. There are lots of complaints about that Board. Only yesterday I read that they have banned "Hartal" films. That shows prejudice in one way. There is complaint on the other hand that in social life, in prohibiting social excesses, the Board does not do its duty properly. If there is a Board it must be responsible to public opinion. I cannot suggest how exactly.

Mr. Green: The press, of course, is one of the methods?

A. I think it is doing its duty, but unless it is an extremely good or bad film it does not take up criticism.

Q. So you are in favour of the cinema subject to certain limitations?

A. Entirely.

Mr. Naogy: Have you noticed any tendency on the part of the Indian producers to imitate those objectionable features of the western films?

A. I will tell you from what I have observed. I am in touch with the companies in Maharashtra. Under the stress of competition they are tempted further and further but even then there is a kind of restraint which they impose upon themselves and that restraint is still binding on them and they do not exceed that. They do not go to the extent of the social life of the western.

Q. That is competition for securing patronage?

A. These objectionable films when exhibited naturally have a effect of drawing larger house. This is an inducement for the Indian film producer to gradually approximate to the Western ideal. That should be stopped. Even then when the Indian producer depicts social life he does not go to that length partly because it is not true to Indian life.

Q. These films you talk of are mostly manufactured in your Province?

A. I think some are. Some are manufactured in Bombay, some in Poona and some in Nasik.

Q. Do you approve of the stories depicting social life as filmed in Bombay? Are they based on any standard literature?

A. There are a few subjects such as will catch public attention. But there is one kind of film which the Indian producers produce. These are the Puranic films and are of eternal interest and if the scenes are properly selected they have a good effect.

Q. So far as social films are concerned, do you think there is any chance for scenario-writing to be established as a sort of profession?

A. It will take time as it is very difficult to make social life attractive. It requires a great deal of art and that will come by and by.

Q. Do you think first rate dramatists would take to scenario-writing?

A. Certainly there are people with dramatic talent who might go in for it. That may make their fortune or secure better living than as a school-master.

Colonel Crawford: A large number of witnesses have pressed upon us the necessity for public utility films and how those films are to be produced. As the Chairman has said, it is not a commercial proposition. You have to find an agency to do it. Should it be a private agency subsidised by Government or would you prefer Government to undertake the business?

A. I think Government should not undertake this work but if there is a company which pledges itself to particular kinds of films Government should help.

Chairman: If private agency is available you would prefer it?

A. Yes.

Colonel Crawford: Do you consider private agency is the best method of producing public utility films?

A. Yes.

Q. Educational films, you have no doubt as to their general good effect?

A. I welcome them. Educational films are a necessity.

Q. Just one point about this "Hartal film". Just a question of principle? As a question of principle should any film be used for definite propaganda against any Government?

A. The film of the tour of the Prince of Wales was also exhibited.

Q. I am asking on the question of principle. I am not taking this particular subject. Can a film be allowed to be used against the constitution of a country?

A. If it goes against that it is a different matter. We may take the matter under two different categories,—films that have a definite legitimate object—whatever propaganda work they might do, they should not be banned. But if the film goes so far as, say, treason or class hatred, that, of course, may be banned.

Q. I am taking it only on a question of principle?

A. Some one must bear the responsibility of doing it and keep himself liable to be questioned on that point and render an account of what has been done.

Q. What should be the action of the censors in the case of a film attacking the Indian constitution?

A. Supposing there is a film which ridicules the Reforms, I would not mind it. But if there is a film which depicts a war between the Government and the Indian people or say the manufacture of bombs or armed rebellion, I would certainly ban it, but not ordinary propaganda work.

Chairman: In that connection (handing over a book to the witness) read these instructions. Those are the rules prevailing in Bombay. Do you think clauses (d), (e) and (f) are sufficient?

A. I think the instances are fairly good but much would depend upon the Board.

Q. You have no objection to the rules as they are?

A. They are fairly good.

*Oral Evidence of Mr. J. P. MATHUR, Proprietor, Photo Service Company, Delhi, on Wednesday, the 22nd February 1928.

Chairman: What is your exact position in this company?

A. I am the owner.

Q. What part did you take in the productions?

- A. So far as "The Light of Asia" was concerned, I was one of the actors, technicians and financiers. Of course, I made some topical films also.
- Q. What did you do with the topical films?
- A. Some of those we have sent to Fox and Company. We develop and print the films and send them there. We have our own laboratory here and of course in some cases we have to send the negatives.
- Q. You are compelled to send the negatives?
- A. Yes.
- Q. Did they pay you well?
- A. Not well. It is not a paying proposition. It is to a certain extent, that is all.
- Q. What is the longest film you have made besides "The Light of Asia"?
- A. I have taken films of the Legislative Assembly, the opening of the Legislature, and so on. Some of them, for instance the Opening of the Legislature, were very good subjects.
- Q. Was it exhibited in India?
- A. No.
- Q. You hold the rights there?
- A. Yes.
- Q. Were any of your topical films exhibited in India?
- A. There is not enough demand. Madans are controlling the whole show and they have got their own department more or less and there is no scope for other products.
- Q. Why don't you try other cinemas?
- A. They do not care for topicals.
- Q. Did you try the Globe circuit?
- A. No.
- Q. How is it you did not try England at all?
- A. I don't find there is enough market. There is not enough interest somehow.
- Q. Why do you say it?
- A. I have approached several companies in England and they are not sufficiently interested in it. What interests India does not appeal to England.
- Q. But you sent your films to America?
- A. Because I get more returns from America.
- Q. And it is interesting to the Americans?
- A. So far only one film has been interesting to them.
- Q. Which is it?
- A. "The Opening of the Legislature."
- Q. All the rest were not interesting enough? You have sent only one to America?
- A. Yes. Of course the rest are of interest to Delhi.
- Q. In the Chelmsford Club they are giving only private shows?
- A. Yes.
- Q. Beyond your connection with the "Light of Asia" have you any interest in any exhibition, in any cinema house?
- A. Yes; my interest is also in the Great Eastern Corporation. They are the producers and renters of films. They have no cinema halls themselves.
- Q. Do you import films?
- A. No.
- Q. Have the Great Eastern Corporation anything to do with the new venture in Agra?

- A. The Corporation as such has nothing to do with it.
- Q. So that was your first attempt in connection with the film?
- A. Yes.
- Q. The actors and the actresses? Was that also their first attempt?
- A. They had their training to a certain extent.
- Q. Had they any training in any school or college?
- A. Mostly it was a question of people who were interested and who made a thorough study of it.
- Q. Who gave the instruction?
- A. Mr. Austin was the Director and there were two other technicians from Germany.
- Mr. Green: The Director also was a German?
- A. Yes.
- Chairman: Was there any Indian to assist him in direction?
- A. Yes, Mr. Niranjan Pal was giving suggestions to the Director.
- Mr. Neogy: Was he present all along?
- A. Yes.
- Chairman: We heard the other day that it has not paid its way?
- A. No. It was the first effort. I am justified in saying that except that we had an interest, we did not make a thorough study of the business. That is why it did not prove financially a success. It proved a success as regards the technique and the artistic qualities.
- Q. That is the best Indian produced film so far as one can say?
- A. Yes.
- Q. What do you think the Government should do to encourage film production in this country?
- A. Personally I think no art or industry has ever flourished without the patronage of the Government. Unless there is a right sort of interest taken by Government it will be a hard task to really go ahead with the work. They must have a sort of protection.
- Q. What sort of help?
- A. Government should safeguard the interest of the producer by selling the productions in the different markets and if necessary also by giving them financial help.
- Q. Financial loans?
- A. Yes. For instance, so far in India we have not been producing good enough films which can be utilised in the foreign markets.
- Q. Have you travelled in the West?
- A. Yes.
- Q. In America?
- A. Not in America but I was on the Continent.
- Q. Have you been to the studios there?
- A. That was the first work that I did.
- Q. You tried to educate yourself for the film industry?
- A. I had good opportunities to see the studios.
- Q. Where did you study?
- A. In Munich mostly.
- Q. You were allowed free access?
- A. I had no difficulties at all.
- Q. And now in what portion of the technique are you qualified?
- A. As one of the cameramen I was in charge of a laboratory for developing and printing pictures.

Q. Why have you not started a producing industry?

A. I have not enough money. Whatever I can I spend on this industry. But somehow I find there is lack of faith, trust, and co-operation which are most essential in building up business.

Q. You mean people do not organise themselves?

A. It is a question of difference of opinion and party feeling.

Q. They do not forget personalities in connection with business. What is the remedy? How can Government help?

A. Government can help by giving loans on certain terms.

Q. Facilities of access to places?

A. That also to a certain extent.

Q. Anything else you want to suggest?

A. I think just as in Germany Government here should have a well-equipped studio.

Q. Government studios, for what purpose?

A. For the production of educational and industrial films. It will never pay a private producer to do these and educational, industrial, agricultural, and public health films, these must be taken up by Government.

Q. How many studios are there in Germany?

A. There is only one Government studio. And Government there spend a lot for that and they produce public health films and other public utility films.

Q. Do you know anything more about this Government studio?

A. It is a sort of a School of Art.

Q. And to that is attached this studio, is that what you mean?

A. Yes. And there are the best Professors there who have all done great Research work in this line.

Q. So it is a school where photography, acting, direction and other things are taught?

A. Not acting and direction. It is only a place where photography and its allied technique is taught.

Q. And attached to this school is the studio where public utility films are produced?

A. Yes.

Q. How is this studio useful to the ordinary private producer, do you know?

A. The studio is only run as a side-line.

Q. Are the services of the experts in the Government studio lent to private producers?

A. They only coach up students and after training, all capable men get Government jobs.

Q. The point that I want to get at is this: How private producers are helped by Government in Germany? I want to know, apart from this studio, is there any further help given?

A. I think to a certain extent they do help in some ways.

Q. If you are not sure, then say so.

A. No, I am not sure.

Q. You have never interested yourself on the exhibition side, I suppose?

A. Surely I am interested in that and I have studied the thing also, but I have had nothing to do with the exhibition side. I am more or less a technician.

Q. Do you think you will be able to get good actors and actresses provided there is the field for them?

A. There is a lot of scope in India. At present many of the Indian films lack in energy and life. They have been directed very badly.

Q. What would you suggest then to remedy the evil?

A. Our students must be sent out to foreign countries and scholarships should be given to them to learn the art. That is very important.

Q. Is there anything else you want to suggest?

A. As regards the Educational films Government should establish a central laboratory to take news films and educational films for propaganda purposes. That would be very useful.

Colonel Crawford: With regard to the Topical pictures, do you think that a certain number of Indian topical subjects would be suitable for exhibition in the other parts of the Empire?

A. I think they would be very useful.

Q. Is there anybody producing Empire Topical films here in India?

A. I don't think so.

Q. What about Pathés?

A. They are not very regular.

Q. Have you thought of approaching Pathe as to the nature of the subjects they wish to have?

A. But somehow their payments are not adequate. That is the difficulty.

Q. The same is your answer, I suppose, with regard to Indian topical films to be shown in India?

A. Indian Topicals don't pay as it is.

Q. Your connection with the production of the "Light of Asia" has made you think that it would better to produce pictures of international importance?

A. Yes.

Q. Would you think it essential to the life of the Indian cinema industry that Indian films should be produced in such a way as to command international value?

A. Yes, it is very important. We cannot invest more money on films which only have an Indian value. If we could spend more money and produce pictures of international importance that will fetch more profit.

Q. Did your people get into touch with foreign exhibitors and foreign producers in the production of the "Light of Asia"?

A. We first tried Great Britain but we could not succeed there. Then by some chance we made arrangements with Germany and it was decided that the technicians, actors and the financiers were to divide the profits equally between them at the rate of 33 1/3 per cent. each.

Q. Where did you get the capital from?

A. All the finances was found in India alone, but only German experts were sought for.

Q. Do you think the Indian public is satisfied with the present Indian films?

A. Generally they are not satisfied with these cheap films. They consider them not quite good enough.

Q. They are getting bored now, is that the position?

A. Except for religious films where Hindu Mythology and other things are concerned.

Q. As regards finance, I notice you contemplate State Aid. Is that the correct method of financing the industry?

A. I think if Government could do so, that will help the industry a good deal.

Q. I agree, there is no doubt about that. But is that the most healthy method? Would it not be better to find the necessary capital in collaboration with the exhibitors?

A. Yes, to a certain extent.

- Q. Would that not be a healthier method?
- A. I don't think the exhibitors are really rich enough, except the Madans. But if they could find out resources, then it would be useful.
- Q. Regarding this German studio—did it undertake research work in photography and Cinematography, as a whole?
- A. Yes, it did. All the best cameramen in Germany were sent out from that Government school.
- Mr. Neogy: You have suggested that our young men should be sent abroad for getting trained in Cinematography?
- A. Yes.
- Q. Your connection with the "Light of Asia" gave you a very good introduction to the producers on the Continent?
- A. Yes.
- Q. Do you think that anybody and everybody going there to learn would find the same opportunity?
- A. Provided he gets the right type of introduction.
- Q. What do you mean by the right type of introduction?
- A. Official aid and all that. Surely our Government could take some steps in securing every facility for our young men who go abroad.
- Q. Take the case of Germany. What official influence can be exercised in order to secure admission for our young men there?
- A. The Principal of the Government school there should be addressed and then there should be no difficulty.
- Q. You have mentioned the German Government studio. Is it a sort of school where anybody and everybody could get admission on payment of fees?
- A. Yes, I think on the payment of nominal fees.
- Q. Do you think that kind of training is good enough or would you also put your men in the producing studios?
- A. After they had their elementary training in India and after their study at the specialised schools it is better for them to spend a few years abroad for study.
- Q. Do you think private producers abroad would entertain Indians?
- A. I have not investigated that point.
- Q. But you know British studios are not quite up to the mark?
- A. Yes, that is so and British artists are not paid so well as they are paid abroad.
- Q. Have you any idea about the length of the course which a cameraman has to take to finish his training?
- A. I think one year in the College and one year outside would be ample.
- Q. Do you know whether the German Government studio lends the services of its own men for the production of entertainment films to private producers?
- A. Private producers do the work themselves. They have their own studios. The Government studio is mostly meant for research education.
- Q. You send your topical pictures to America?
- A. Yes, I do.
- Q. How did you get into touch with those people there?
- A. I met a gentleman on board the steamer and he put me on to the right line.
- Q. So far, you have dealt with only one firm in America?
- A. Yes, only one.
- Q. But you have not tried England or other parts of the Empire?
- A. No.

- Q. How is it?
- A. To my mind the only interesting film that could command international importance was the opening of the Indian Legislature. Other films were not of sufficient importance.
- Q. Then why did you not send that film, the opening of the Indian Legislature?
- A. By previous arrangement with the American firm I cannot send the films which I supply them to other dealers in any other country.
- Q. So you are precluded from selling your pictures to other people?
- A. Yes.
- Mr. Green: You don't think there is much possibility of having an Indian Topical Gazette?
- A. I think it will be very useful if we could have one.
- Q. Do you think it will be a paying concern?
- A. I think it will be paying.
- Q. If a Company had the enterprise to advertise and say, we will pay so much for topical scenes and pictures, collect them weekly and circulate them throughout India, would that be a good thing to do according to you?
- A. I think that is a very good idea. Different theatres are controlled by different parties. In India there are only nearly 350 cinema halls.
- Q. Topical pictures could be shown at every cinema. It is not like a feature film?
- A. But then Topicals don't pay well. They hardly pay 12 or 15 rupees per reel which hardly goes to cover the expenses.

Oral Evidence of Kumar GANGANAND SINHA, M.A., M.L.A., of Bihar and Orissa, on Wednesday, the 22nd February 1928.

Chairman: You represent Bihar and Orissa in the Assembly?

- A. Yes.
- Q. Are there many cinemas in your province?
- A. No, practically none. Perhaps there is a badly kept one at Patna. Occasionally some cinemas come from Calcutta and other places.
- Q. You mean the travelling cinemas?
- A. Yes.
- Q. They come over there sometimes?
- A. Yes.
- Q. Which is the nearest town to your place?
- A. Purnea.
- Q. I suppose you have to go a long way if you have to see a cinema show?
- A. Yes, quite so. But I have seen many pictures while at Calcutta which place I have to visit often.
- Q. So, you have seen cinemas at Calcutta very often?
- A. Yes.
- Q. Why is it more cinemas have not sprung into existence in your province?
- A. Generally only the English educated people go to the cinemas, and their number in different towns and village is not sufficiently large to make a cinema pay.
- Q. Or is it due to the poverty of the province?
- A. It may be so, but if good films which would suit the Indian temperament are shown, I think that will attract more people.

Q. You think the films now shown don't suit the Indian temperament?

A. Of course, they are suitable so far as the English educated people are concerned.

Q. But in Calcutta these cinemas are very popular with all classes of people?

A. But I believe people who go there are mostly English educated people.

Q. Are Indian films shown in your province?

A. No, not in my province but I have seen them in Calcutta.

Q. Do you think that more Indian films should be produced?

A. Yes, I think so. There is ample scope for the production of Indian films.

Q. Then why is it they are not produced in greater numbers than now?

A. I think want of capital may be one reason; want of competition among themselves may be another. As a matter of fact I find Madans have got a monopoly, as it were, of all cinema houses all over India and they produce the largest number of Indian films.

Chairman: I don't think you are right there.

Mr. Green: Probably in Bengal it might be so.

Chairman: I see. Have you seen any Bombay film?

A. Yes, I have seen a few of them.

Q. Do you think they are attractive to the educated Indian?

A. Yes, in their own way.

Q. Have you any definite suggestions to make with regard to the improvement of the Indian film industry?

A. I have not had occasion to study the question but it appears to me that more capital should be invested in this business and it should be made a paying concern, when competition might arise and better films might be produced.

Q. Do you suggest that Government should take some steps in that direction?

A. Yes, certainly. Just as the Government helps other industries, it should help this also.

Q. What industries does Government protect now?

A. Why, take for instance, the steel industry which is protected by Government. I think the Tariff Board might look into that matter. If it satisfies the conditions laid down by the Fiscal Commission, it may be helped.

Q. Why should not this committee make the recommendation, being appointed for this very purpose?

A. Yes, it might do it.

Q. Now, what is your opinion as to the effect of the Western films on the public in India? Do you think it has any evil or good effect?

A. I look upon it as a mere diversion. I do not think it has any bad effect.

Q. Do you think it has any demoralising effect on the public?

A. Certainly not.

Q. You don't think that any of the films you have seen have a demoralising effect on the adolescents?

A. I don't think so.

Q. You think the censorship as obtains now is quite adequate?

A. From what I have seen of the films exhibited I think they are all right.

Q. So, you have not seen any objectionable film or scene?

A. No.

Q. You have constantly visited the cinemas at Calcutta?

A. Yes, occasionally whenever I was there.

Q. Have you come across any objectionable posters?

A. I don't think I have seen objectionable ones, but it all depends upon the temperament of the man who views these things.

Q. You might have seen big posters exhibited whereon you find the man kissing the woman and the woman embracing the man and all that. Have you any objection to such posters?

A. Those who have noticed English life would not object to them.

Q. Do you think it is good for the people of this country to see such big posters exhibited on the public walls? There are some posters where you find women in almost a nude condition?

A. It might seem objectionable to some people.

Q. Do you think then that these posters should be censored?

A. If possible they should be controlled.

Q. Do you think there is plenty of scope for producing more films in this country?

A. I think in India if we get enough capital and if it is properly encouraged, this industry is bound to thrive. There is no dearth of scenery here. We have got enough dramatic talents. I am sure we could produce any number of social and mythological films which would certainly be appreciated by people in this country, especially the illiterates.

**Oral Evidence of Mr. K. V. RANGASWAMY AYYANGAR, M.L.A.,
Landholder and Chairman, Srirangam, Trichinopoly, on Wednesday,
the 22nd February 1928, at New Delhi.**

Chairman: We are obliged to you, Mr. Ayyangar, for your having found time to come over here and give evidence. You come from Trichinopoly?

A. Yes.

Q. How many cinemas are there in Trichinopoly?

A. I think there is only one.

Q. And in Srirangam is there any cinema?

A. There was one started there which they closed after running it for a month or so.

Q. Why did they close it, do you know?

A. I think it was not at all paying in spite of there being a population of 30,000.

Q. But it is an attractive pilgrim centre, is it not?

A. Yes, no doubt, but pilgrims seldom visit these cinemas. Even during the Ekadasi festival when they showed the "Birth of Sri-Krishna" and other films it did not attract people at all.

Q. You say pilgrims seldom visit these cinemas, why is it so?

A. There was one Canniah's dramatic company there and he was giving dramatic performances of some *avatars*, Ramanuja Charitram, etc., which attracted full houses. But the people of the pilgrim class have not taken to cinema going.

Q. Have you seen many Indian films?

A. I have seen some a long time ago.

Q. You don't go to the cinema much?

A. Not generally.

Q. From your experience of the people do you think the cinema has got a good effect?

A. To people who are not accustomed to go to foreign countries it gives an idea of the life of the western nations. So far as I am aware the cinema has gone to enhance the reputation of western ideals and morals in the eyes of the Indians.

Q. You don't think it has any demoralising effect on our people?

A. I don't think so.

Q. Mr. Kelkar told us just now that these sex films and other things have got a demoralising effect on the people?

A. Human nature is the same throughout whether East or West. I don't think there is any demoralising effect.

Q. Don't you consider that young people, by seeing these close-kissing, hugging, etc., are affected?

A. After all what is it when compared to the East? As I have put it, human nature is the same whether it is in the East or in the West. Supposing one depicts the Harems of Oudh or the lives of the Emperors of Oudh.

Q. It is not so easy to get access to the Harems of the Emperors of Oudh?

A. When novels about them are allowed to be read, when a love story about them is allowed, I do not know why this should have a bad effect especially when the particular manners and customs of a people are understood.

Q. Anyway you are not apprehensive of any bad effects?

A. I am not.

Q. On the other hand you think they are useful for giving them knowledge?

A. They are useful in industries, in educating the masses and in many other ways. There was a report in the papers of a Ceyloneser jumping from a parachute after seeing a cinema.

Q. You think public educational films (in a broad sense) should be produced?

A. Yes. As a matter of fact, our Health Officer at Srirangam was requesting me to bring in all the health films from Madras. We could not provide for them in the municipality on account of want of funds. If they can be provided it will be of great value to the public.

Q. You are now the Chairman of the Municipality?

A. Yes. And now with very great difficulty we have been able to provide some of the malarial pictures and some pictures of how mosquitoes breed and carry the malaria germ, etc.

Q. You think there is a great need for such films?

A. Yes. I think Government should produce them or cause them to be produced and distribute them to every municipality and cinema centre.

Q. Do you advise Government establishing a studio for that purpose?

A. Somehow these health films should be produced and exhibited in villages also. It will be an ideal to be sought after.

Q. Would you advocate the expenditure of public funds in this line?

A. I would certainly advocate it.

Q. Do you advocate the grant of scholarships to people employed in the industry to go to foreign countries and learn the technique of the trade?

A. Yes.

Q. I take it then that your general opinion is that the cinema is for the good of the people and it ought to be encouraged.

A. Yes. Education in whatever form is for the good of the people and the cinema can diffuse knowledge even to the illiterate.

Mr. Green: You said that in your opinion the cinema actually enhances western civilisation in the estimation of the public?

A. Yes.

Q. You are not frightened that it is going to have any denationalising effect?

A. As I grow older I think that human nature is the same throughout and there is nothing there to depict the Western nation in dark colours in the cinema. The method of life, etc., shown is mostly American and even if country people see their method of life, the reputation of the West is not going to be lost.

Q. I am not worried about that at all. I was only wondering whether it could have any denationalising effect on the Indian observer himself?

A. There is nothing denationalising there. Every one is wedded to the customs and manners of his country. He will only appreciate how human customs, manners and dress differ in the West from the East.

Mr. Neogy: There is no tendency to imitate on the part of Indians?

A. I don't think there is anything injurious in imitating anything.

Chairman: You want to imitate their night clubs and cabaret scenes?

A. I do not know whether they are not found even in India and whether everyone in the West haunts those clubs.

Q. You mean worse things take place here?

A. Yes.

Mr. Green: So far as there are different customs which are possibly only different.....

A. Let me take an example, wearing boots and wearing sandals. In a country like my place I wear only sandals; but here in Delhi I wear shoes. I don't think there is much culture lost in wearing a shoe instead of a sandal, or having a daily shave instead of a weekly one.

Q. Some witnesses have told us that the representation of kissing ought to be entirely cut out, because kissing is not considered seemly by Indians.

A. Kissing is allowed even in the case of adults in Western countries. For example, a brother kisses a sister, while in the East kissing is allowed only for the young daughters or sons by their parents.

Chairman: Even that is allowed only when they are young.

A. When they become old they don't kiss generally and I don't think morals will be lost or the prestige of the West will be lowered if we understand that it is the custom there to do a certain thing. When two princes meet they hug shoulder to shoulder.

Mr. Green: I am not worried in the slightest about the prestige of western civilisation.

Chairman: Some witnesses have told us that such scenes ought to be banned. I mean some Indian witnesses.

A. Even when a girl is 14 years of age we kiss the head of the girl when celebrating the marriage. It is one of the rituals. We also kiss the head of the bride-groom.

Mr. Neogy: The kissing of lovers stands on a different footing?

A. Yes. But husbands here also kiss their wives as warmly as elsewhere.

Mr. Green: They don't kiss in public?

A. No.

Chairman: So is not that a difficulty about the cinema, that it really removes the wall of one's private house and exhibits your private life. I mean to say what happens in a room is shown on a screen.

A. Yes.

Mr. Green: You don't think there is any harm in it?

A. Hugging and kissing are freely allowed in Indian dramatic performances. I have seen that at Madras, Bombay and Calcutta. When this is allowed to be done on the stage I don't know how they object to it being shown on the screen. There is nothing there in the cinema which is not done on the Indian stage.

***Oral Evidence of Mr. HIMANSU RAI, Actor and Director, on
Saturday, the 25th February 1928.**

Chairman: I propose to trouble you only on two points. If you want to give your evidence in camera I don't mind. The two points are: (1) about the "Light of Asia" and (2) about the new company in which you are interested. If you want to give your evidence in camera please tell me.

A. It entirely depends upon the particulars which I have to submit.

Q. If you want to keep anything out of the Press you may say so.

A. Yes, thank you.

Q. You were the chief actor in "The Light of Asia"? In the part of Buddha?

A. Yes.

Q. I suppose all the actors and actresses were Indians?

A. Yes. They were all recruited from India.

Q. One of them was an Anglo-Indian?

A. Yes. The girl who took the leading part was an Anglo-Indian. She appeared as Sita Devi.

Q. That was the first time she assumed that name?

A. Yes.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: Is she one of those we have seen?

A. Her name is Dyer, I believe.

Chairman: We have seen her.

Mr. Green: That very young girl?

A. Yes.

Chairman: Who recruited the actresses?

A. I did.

Q. Are they fairly respectable people?

A. So far as I know all of them were respectable.

Q. Did you find any difficulty in getting them to join?

A. Very much.

Q. I suppose the actors also were from a respectable class of people?

A. Yes. When I say actors I mean the principal actresses and actors.

Q. You took them from Bombay and Bengal?

A. Some were from Madras, some from Bengal, some from Hyderabad.

Q. When you say that you took people from Madras, I suppose you mean Mrs. Naidoo's sister, Mrs. Rajam?

A. I forget the name of the two ladies who came from Madras. I know they were Madras ladies.

Q. You did not have a Bengali lady except Mrs. Ragavan in the whole cast?

A. No.

Q. The others were Parsees I think?

A. Some were Parsees and also there were two Madras Hindu ladies. Is there any community called Puvaja in Madras?

Q. No.

A. I will let you have the information later on.

Q. That does not matter. Did they do honorary work?

A. All the actors and actresses were paid for the job.

Q. We had the figures given to us by the Secretary of the Corporation, that it has not paid its way yet so far as the Corporation was concerned?

A. So I am informed.

Q. There were 3 people who were interested financially?

A. There were more than that.

Q. I mean 3 parties?

A. Yes. The profits were shared between 3 parties.

Q. One German interest, the other Niranjana Pal's and the 3rd was your interest?

A. No. It was like this: German interest, the Great Eastern Corporation Limited, and then myself and Niranjana Pal.

Q. The finance was found by the Great Eastern Corporation. I mean the whole finance for the production?

A. Yes. But services were rendered by the German Syndicate. They supplied cameras, etc. The German interest was by their supplying the technicians and the equipment required for camera work.

Mr. Neogy: Did they supply dress and other things?

A. No. They had two services to perform. One was supplying the technical equipment and the other was marketing of the picture.

Chairman: They undertook the marketing for all the three interests?

A. Yes.

Q. I understood that in marketing the areas were divided between you three—England was given to you and Niranjana Pal.

A. Yes. Niranjana Pal contracted with Emelka. He approached Emelka and got the exhibition rights in Great Britain. He got the rights for a time only. The rights have gone back to Emelka now.

Q. Are you familiar with the attempts made for exhibiting the "Light of Asia" in England?

A. To a certain extent I am.

Q. We have been told that the exhibitors showed a disinclination to accept it for their theatres?

A. That was the impression gained at the moment but I don't believe in it personally.

Mr. Green: What do you mean by saying that you don't believe in it?

A. I mean to say that there are certain methods by which you can sell a picture in any market. As those methods were not adopted for the selling of this particular picture I cannot see how it can be said that the British trade showed any disinclination to see the picture.

Chairman: Who did the negotiation?

A. Emelka had to be consulted about the contract and then Mr. Niranjana Pal himself took the picture to England from America.

Q. How many copies did you make?

A. I don't know.

Q. You say he did not adopt the proper methods to approach the trade. Is that your view?

A. Yes.

Q. Were you there at the time?

A. Yes.

Q. Did you advise them about it?

A. Yes.

Q. Then they did not take it perhaps?

A. They could not. They had already begun on wrong lines. I was not there when it was begun. I was then in New York.

Q. When did Niranjana Pal give it up?

A. He strove for 9 months and then gave it up.

Q. This was in 1926, I suppose?

A. Yes.

Q. Since then has any attempt been made to show the picture in England?

A. It is going on now. It is now being shown by the British trade.

Q. How are the returns?

A. I am not fully informed as to what money the picture is bringing from the English and the Scottish markets at the present moment.

Q. On the continent it was shown with success?

A. I believe that in the year 1925 and 1926 there was not another picture whether American, German or English which had more reputation than this.

Q. In France also?

A. France only started showing it one or two years ago. I mean in Central Europe.

Q. I do not know if you are aware of this: In a letter, dated October 5, 1927, by these people: "We have already told you in our previous correspondence that the English business has indeed failed to fulfil our hopes, that in our opinion the blame cannot be entirely put upon Mr. Rai or Pal. But it was rather.....which brought the insignificant financial success". That is their report. Here they have stated that you should not be blamed.

A. They were inaccurate there.

Q. They absolve you from blame when they say it is more due to the British Trade.

A. I have no reason to say that the British trade treated this picture in any other way than the way in which they would have treated other pictures. The picture did not come through the proper channel.

Q. What do you mean by that?

A. In the case of any private picture you have to give a trade show, you have to invite the buyers and show them your picture. This was never done. On the other hand the first presentation of the picture was done by Mr. Pal in a concert hall known as the "Philharmonic Hall". And the whole intention of that presentation was that an individual was going to fight the existing trade. The picture went on and then when the picture could not run any more it was offered to the trade. Naturally the trade says that the picture cannot succeed. It has been shown for a long period in London. Some have seen it and some have not and it is a matter which is very difficult to deal with. As a matter of fact the President of the Corporation said that he was still willing to try this picture on a 50-50 basis. Those are the usual terms.

Q. Who bears the advertisement charges?

A. I do not know.

Q. Now you say it is being shown in England. Under what arrangement, do you know?

A. Emelka are selling the territorial rights of the pictures, Scottish rights and Lancashire rights. It is not shown now, and the picture has failed; but the people are trying to get as much as they can out of it.

Q. Did you see it shown in England?

A. Yes.

Q. In the Philharmonic Hall?

A. Yes.

Q. In no other theatres in London?

A. No. Perhaps it had the second longest run there.

Q. Without any box office receipts?

A. The receipts were very poor. You cannot get such receipts in the Philharmonic Hall.

Q. Yes, it is not a popular centre, I know. Did you yourself get any profit from this picture?

A. No.

Q. You have not realised any profit, nor any of the Indian section?

A. None in the Indian section; except that I have done some extra service for which I have been paid.

Q. You mean as an actor?

A. Personally as an actor I did not receive any salary; but when Emelka introduced the picture in Central Europe, they engaged me to help them in the publicity. I was paid for that.

Q. You have not therefore received any profit?

A. No. Everybody maintained they could not sell the picture in France. So I had this picture brought from Emelka by a friend of mine and resold it to Pathe's syndicate in France, the oldest syndicate Europe has had, within a few days.

Q. So that it showed well on the continent?

A. Yes.

Q. There were good box office receipts?

A. Yes.

Q. In America they have not succeeded?

A. No.

Q. Can you tell us what is the reason for that?

A. The same reason, that is, that it is not possible to sell any picture which is not American in America, not because there is any prejudice, but because they have so many pictures.

Q. But they show German and other pictures?

A. Yes, after years of struggle, and after spending so much money for the exploitation of those German pictures. The "Last Laugh," "Vandeville," etc., are known as master-pieces in technique. They have been shown and they have been received very well in America, but they never fetched anything to the producers.

Q. How was that?

A. Because they had to give these pictures only to build up their reputation. After the spade-work has been done, they are now making a profit.

Q. They also say as regards America: in their letter: "The difficulties in the way of lucrative.....are culpable".

A. Producers like Mr. Laemmle who have been famous for their work, sat next to me and they viewed the picture, not once but three times at private shows. And in New York, the Vice-President of the Metropolitan Corporation saw "The Light of Asia" twice and they are all absolutely emphatic that the photography and technique are perfect. Referring to acting, they could not imagine any other form of acting than what we have given in the "Light of Asia" because it was a solemn subject and we had to show a great deal of restraint in all our movements. So far as my information goes, that is the criticism, and I can supply any amount of criticism from America or England.

Q. Have you got the Press reviews about "The Light of Asia" in America, England and other countries?

A. In America, very little, because it was not shown to the public there.

Q. But we would like to have a copy of the Press reviews on "The Light of Asia"?

A. I have not got them, but I shall try and arrange to get a few.

Q. Of course we are struck with the slowness of action in Indian films generally.

A. I think it is too quick. Whenever I had an opportunity of seeing Indian films produced in India, I have noticed that they are adopting the 20 years' old American technique of cow-boy films where people move at 500 miles per hour. In order to show that the pictures are full of action, they are trying to copy the old American technique.

Q. We also are not experts, but we felt that the criticism was well-founded as regards the slowness of action, generally, in Indian films.

Mr. Green: We don't say the people move slowly, but the plot moves slowly?

A. That is true. But I thought the reference was to the action of the artists. I found their action to be too quick. The plot is, of course, defective and that is the first technique we have to learn, i.e., how to write the scenario. Once you write the scenario properly, the other things are easier.

Chairman: You have started a new venture now?

A. Yes.

Q. Who wrote the scenario for it?

A. The scenario was written by Mr. Niranjan Pal and was re-written by the dramatic staff of the "British Instructional".

Q. Has he been interested in this?

A. Yes; it was his story.

Q. He has been collaborating with you?

A. He has been paid for it.

Q. He has not been collaborating with you in this concern?

A. Not in finance.

Q. Who finds the finance?

A. British Instructional Films.

Q. The whole of the finance is found by them?

A. Yes.

Q. What will be the interest of Indians in that?

A. All the artists will be Indians, actors and actresses. The international market will be supplied with another Indian picture.

Q. They have no interest in the business, as such?

A. Personally, I have a certain interest in it.

Q. No other Indian has any pecuniary interest?

A. Except that the author has been paid in cash for the story.

Q. I suppose the scenes are going to be shot here?

A. Yes.

Q. And the developing and printing and other things will take place abroad?

A. Yes.

Q. In England?

A. Not in England, but in England and Germany.

Q. But did you notice in the *Bombay Chronicle* an article denying that any German firm has any interest in this? (Handing the article to the witness.)

A. I have not seen this article. They have written so many articles. Do you wish me to read this?

Q. Yes, do, if you think it should be publicly contradicted or confirmed, we should give you an opportunity to do that?

A. (After reading.) It is very difficult to follow this. I would personally like to give the whole history of this enterprise. If I may be allowed to give the history briefly, then you will understand it better, I think. "Shiraz" was written by an Indian about five or six years ago and it has been our intention to produce this picture. That is why we gave up our stage activities in London and tried to produce the picture here. But we did not get sufficient funds for the production of "Shiraz"; that is why we produced "The Light of Asia".

Q. Shiraz was produced before the "Light of Asia"?

A. I came to India a long time ago with a view to produce "Shiraz", not "The Light of Asia". After the production of "The Light of Asia" I started negotiating for the production of "Shiraz" with Emelka, who delayed their decision for a long time. On account of "The Light of Asia" we had many disagreements, and finally the break came and eventually I began to negotiate with other parties. As a consequence, I received the offer of a contract from Ufa of Berlin who suggested that I should undertake the production of "Shiraz" in India and they would distribute this picture throughout Central Europe on a 50:50 basis, 50 for myself and 50 for them, and they would guarantee me the 50 by giving me an advance on the delivery of the negative for 1,50,000 gold marks, i.e., I believe about £7,500. That is the advance towards our 50 per cent. from Central Europe alone. At that moment some troubles came up, reconstruction began to take place and therefore the final agreement was not signed, but the written offer was given to me. Many months passed, the Ufa was reconstructed and my negotiations were taken up again. Then they finally offered me for all Europe a guarantee of 50:50, a guarantee of about £10,000. Just about that time, I received a letter from Mr. Lindsay, the Indian Trade Commissioner. Mr. Lindsay has been of very great assistance to me and so was the High Commissioner, Sir Atul Chatterjee. It was through them that we were able to present "The Light of Asia" before Her Majesty the Queen. I always kept Mr. Lindsay informed regarding my activity on the continent, where I was negotiating. Because it is necessary when an individual tries to establish business, that he should have some kind of reference. Mr. Lindsay suggested to me that British Instructional were interested in production, and asked me whether I would come in contact with them. So I had a meeting with Mr. Prosul of the British Instructional at Paris. He came down to Paris. Then I told him that I had a guarantee for an Indian picture from Ufa and that I needed finance. Then he said that he was interested in this picture and asked me if it could not be arranged that Ufa should take only the continent and he himself would start distribution in England. "We shall distribute Shiraz in Great Britain," he said. I said "Why not? I shall speak to Ufa and try to arrange this". I spoke to Ufa and they agreed, whereby Ufa reduced the £10,000 guarantee to £7,500 and Mr. Prosul arranged to have the British market for £7,500 from Ufa, also on the 50:50 basis. It was then up to me to arrange for the Indian business. These contracts have been so made that the picture must be produced this winter. The picture will have to be made according to Ufa's contract and we will have to spend about £12,500 which has to be got.

Q. You mean you have to find the finance for producing?

A. Yes. All I could do was to approach Mr. Birla—I had enough experience of Indian finances. This application to Mr. Birla was written by Mr. Bruce Woolfe himself where he explained the whole business and recommended it to Mr. Birla and also pointed out that Mr. Prosul of the British Instructional had so much confidence in this business that in the event of Mr. Birla hesitating to finance the entire amount, the British Instructional would put up half the capital and that Mr. Birla might put up half the capital. He was anxious that the interest of the Indian parties should be retained. We received no response from Mr. Birla. Then we came to this conclusion, that the British Instructional might finance this production. The British Instructional will then be the owner of this picture and another syndicate in England called Pro Patria will distribute the picture through England, Scotland and Ireland and guarantee to the British Instructional £7,500, and the guarantee which I have obtained from Ufa I shall transfer to the British Instructional. When we have made this picture and shown it, however bad it may be, we are sure to make a profit of £2,500; because that is the guarantee amount. If we succeed, we may make much more. So we came to this decision: if there is to be a success in this picture, we shall come before the Indian public, give them the facts about the results of Indian pictures abroad, and then we shall be able to command a greater amount of Indian finance and start a series of pro-

ductions in India for the International market.. In the meantime, by bringing an up-to-date second all-India picture before the International public, we shall create a greater demand for Indian pictures than at present. That is the whole history.

Q. By this new arrangement with the British Instructional, I suppose, Ufa fall to the ground, is it not?

A. No. Ufa are the buyer of this picture so far as the continent is concerned.

Q. So, they retain the right over Europe?

A. Yes, and they have a guarantee from the British Instructional that the return from the British market should not be less than £7,500.

Q. So, that is the arrangement under which you are making preparations for producing the picture?

A. I have started.

Q. You are simply taking photos here and the whole thing will be sent abroad?

A. One negative will go to England, and one to Germany. We are sending one negative every week for being developed. We have a report also every week and we know how our work is going on. Then we will print the picture, and I hope to show the picture next September.

Q. Are you finding any difficulty in getting access to public places, etc.?

A. We have so far only taken our pictures in some little villages on the outskirts of Bombay, and we have just arrived in Agra and we are trying to stage some scenes. I am sure there would be no objection raised anywhere except that we have to work under certain difficulties in public places. For instance, we will have to work in certain places after the public visit them, or sometimes when we are working very hard, somebody will be coming in. Anyhow, I hope we shall be able to get through.

Q. So far as the authorities are concerned, they are very helpful?

A. Yes.

Q. Did you take any introductions?

A. Yes, I have taken introductions.

Q. From the Government of India departments?

A. I have not taken any introductions for the public buildings.

Q. For what then have you taken introductions?

A. I have taken introductions to the Collector of Agra, so that if I need some police help or anything like that, I can have that. I have seen Sir John Marshall personally and asked him to help me, and he has given me certain ideas, etc.

Q. I suppose you believe in the development of Indian films?

A. Very much, Sir.

Q. You would like it to be in Indian hands, if possible?

A. Absolutely.

Q. What steps do you suggest to secure that end?

A. I have taken a definite line of action. This line I am going to follow, that is creating a definite demand in the International market first and supplying the pictures in the name of India. When I can get money in India I shall produce one here with Indian money, and when I cannot get that money, I shall get that money from some others and try to produce pictures.

Q. What I wish to know is this: supposing this interest that you have started develops, what is the guarantee that the Indian public can expect?

A. The guarantee is in the hands of the Indian public themselves. If they would come forward and produce these pictures, then the others will not have the same advantage as they have now. When I first started, I knew that not a single oriental production made in America or Europe was a

financial failure. There was a great deal of interest for Japanese, Indian and Chinese films in the western countries.

Q. You mean they were all successes?

A. Yes, they were all successes. They always made money, however, badly the pictures were made.

Q. You mean in Europe?

A. Yes, and in America also.

Q. Are many oriental pictures shown in America?

A. Yes.

Q. Produced in America?

A. Yes, in their own studios. That is, oriental subjects produced in their own studios.

Q. I was thinking that you said that oriental productions were shown in America?

A. No; the only oriental production that has ever been shown there is the "Light of Asia".

Q. Even that is not really oriental, because the technicians, etc., were all Germans?

A. It is an International art—if I may call it an art—and we call the picture by the name of the country in which it is produced, not when the subject is about that country.

Q. Suppose a film is produced in England, you don't call it American?

A. American pictures produced in England are called British.

Q. But many things will be required which should be American, say, the actors, actresses, etc.?

A. Yes, of course.

Q. So you think that a good Indian picture well produced has got no chance in the International market?

A. No. It would have much better scope than a badly produced and badly handled oriental subject. But there is always the fear, I know, that several pictures have been produced and people have gone over to Europe to try and sell them and they could not sell them.

Q. So you say that the best Indian picture, I do not mean your picture, actually produced, developed and printed in India has no chance of a market outside India?

A. No, not in its present condition unless the printing technique and camera work are bettered.

Q. Have you seen "Sacrifice"?

A. No.

Q. So what arrangement should be made to introduce a picture outside India?

A. I think you will have to enter into a previous arrangement with the exhibitors.

Q. You must get the patronage of a circuit or something of that sort?

A. We must enter into a contract.

Mr. Green: So this is the ordinary method of production? You mean the producer gets a guarantee for exhibition?

A. At least he gets the cost of production completely guaranteed. This is the case in almost every country, in Germany, France, even in America.

Chairman: Have you been to Japan at all?

A. No.

Q. How many people are interested in this British Instructional? Is it a registered company or a private concern?

A. It is a public limited company. It is a very large company.

Q. What is the interest of Commander Neville Rolfe in that?

A. He is one of the representatives of the firm.

Q. Is he a Director?

A. I have already stated that the British Instructional in association with me intend later on to arrange for an Indo-British Company for production. In view of this Commander Rolfe is here.

Mr. Green: Is he pecuniarily interested in British Instructional Films?

A. Yes. But I don't know exactly how.

Q. Is he an employee or has he any direct interest in the company?

A. My connection with British Instructional is not very old and I don't know. But I have seen Commander Rolfe in the office and I have not yet had an opportunity of meeting him.

Chairman: So the Indian industry requires a great deal to develop if it is to be a success at all. What do you advise to advance the industry from your experience? Can the Government do anything?

A. Personally I do not think the Government can do anything. I think that enterprise should be developed by people interested in the cinema.

Q. That may be said of every industry. How did the Government help in Japan?

A. I have not studied the conditions there.

Q. In Japan they have, during the last six years, produced their own films and the local production is now 70 per cent.

A. I am very pleased to hear it.

Q. Do you think a similar thing should be done in this country?

A. I am most anxious that Indian cinematography should be artistically and commercially of a higher standard.

Q. Have you seen any Japanese films?

A. No, but I have seen Chinese productions. They are technically very imperfect, their scenario, their play, all that, is not at all praiseworthy.

Q. But it is popular among the Chinese?

A. May be. But I strongly think that the commercial and artistic lines may be combined in cinematography and if we depend upon the Indian market alone our cinematography will take a long time to come to any standard at all.

Q. You are familiar with the way the German Government have advanced their own production?

A. Not in full detail.

Q. You know in substance at least?

A. Yes, they passed their quota or Kontingent Bill long ago.

Q. What is the Kontingent they enforce?

A. I think 40.

Q. That has succeeded in establishing the German industry?

A. It has.

Q. Would you advise a quota system for India?

A. I would advise that exactly a similar bill to that which has been passed in England should be passed here for Indian films. I am most anxious that Indian films should receive preferential treatment in the British market.

Q. Do you know of any Indian film imported into England?

A. I know of one which is going to be imported under conditions which no company, be it German, American or French will ever get. That is Shiraz. For my own picture there was an offer from the British Instructional for £7,500.

Mr. Neogy: You have already explained that there is lack of Indian capital for the industry. Have you recruited your staff here?

A. Yes.

Q. You mean the "acting" staff?

A. Yes.

Q. Have you recruited all your people?

A. We recruit as we go along.

Q. You are experiencing the same difficulty in finding women particularly?

A. Yes.

Q. What about the technical staff, where do they come from, for instance, the Directors?

A. The Director is a German, one of the cameramen is an Englishman, another cameraman is a German and there is an Assistant Director who is British.

Q. But then in directing Indian plays don't you think that association of some Indian Directors is necessary?

A. I have taken upon myself that task.

Q. You will be advising off and on?

A. I am advising right through. The scenario has been developed according to my advice, the costumes and the mode of acting all these are done according to my advice.

Q. Then what room is there for the non-Indian experts to direct?

A. The non-Indians direct only the technical part of it.

Q. And what is it?

A. It is a thing which needs about 25 years' experience. Then only can you call a man a Director.

Q. About the lighting in the studios?

A. We have the light expert, the cameramen and on the top of them all the Director.

Q. You have taken films without artificial lighting in your studios?

A. Yes, we can do that.

Q. Is that the German expert's view?

A. Everybody believes it.

Mr. Green: Have you reflectors in your studio?

A. We have.

Mr. Neogy: Then you consider that the efforts of those producers who have been thinking of putting up elaborate studios with artificial lighting arrangements are unnecessary?

A. It is absolutely unnecessary expenditure. They would be better advised if they put their money into printing the films without having the necessity to send the films to foreign countries.

Q. In developing is there any difficulty here?

A. Except that the work does not justify the amount of expenditure involved. Otherwise as in the case of the "Light of Asia" we have every other facility. The water of the Mussoorie was good and helped us much in the production.

Q. Where did you get your experience in this line?

A. My experience is not technical.

Q. More on the artistic side?

A. Yes.

Q. Where were you employed in the industry before you took up the production of the "Light of Asia"?

A. My experience is limited to stage acting and small parts in the studios, sometimes supervising the so-called oriental productions.

Mr. Green: In what country?

A. In England.

Mr. Neogy: You have spent many years in Europe?

A. I have spent off and on 15 years there.

Q. Have you been to American studios?

A. Yes.

Q. To German studios?

A. Yes.

Q. Did you take any part in the production of any pictures in America or Germany?

A. In America I did, but not in England.

Chairman: What Indian picture was produced?

A. It was an Egyptian picture.

Mr. Neogy: Now, we have to consider the question of how to train our people in the various branches of this industry. What will be your advice in this matter?

A. My advice would be that the gentlemen who go must first of all learn camera work.

Q. Is it possible for one man to learn all the branches of work?

A. No.

Q. So one must specialise in one particular subject?

A. I think he must start as a cameraman and gradually work his way up to become a producer.

Q. Are there facilities for men to learn camera work in first rate studios anywhere outside India?

A. There have been students already, particularly in Germany.

Chairman: Language, is that a difficulty in learning the art?

A. No. Indian students generally pick up German soon.

Mr. Neogy: Is there any prejudice against Indian students?

A. No, except when the students expect to be paid for the work that they do in the studio.

Q. Some recommendation is necessary?

A. Of course, it is necessary with the German people as it is with the English as the profession is overcrowded.

Q. Would you be prepared to support the idea of State scholarships?

A. Yes.

Q. And for what period for learning the camera work?

A. Two years.

Q. Would you recommend a raw man to be sent or a man with some experience in the work?

A. If he is a State scholar it is better he is a man who knows something of the profession. He goes there only for supplementing his information and knowledge and in his case perhaps the course might be shorter than in the case of a raw man.

Q. Have you seen any Indian production other than "The Light of Asia"?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you know who produced these pictures?

A. I saw some pictures in Bombay produced by the "Imperial". I forget the names. I found that the technique which they have developed in the 2½ years was wonderful. They certainly showed that they are capable of doing camera work. But the Directors showed absolute ignorance of any direction and the scenario-writers showed no promise at all. But a camera-

man without going abroad can become a good technician by reading the literature on the subject.

Q. So they are a promising lot?

A. Certainly.

Q. But what about the rest of the training? That is, the artistic side, direction?

A. If once he learns his art well as a cameraman he is sure to become gradually a director, for example, when I came here I wanted some from the trade to join my staff as assistants and so forth and by doing that I have offended some of them.

Q. In what way?

A. Because they cannot imagine that they have anything to learn. Unfortunately they think that the Indian Directors will work them like grooms. So I think the first thing is that when they go to the studio they must first of all learn the technique of the camera. I do not think that even in British firms they become suddenly directors. The Director will have to direct the cameramen, direct the light expert, in fact he must know everything.

Q. Do you think a visit to foreign countries would be helpful in producing good scenario-writers?

A. I don't think so. They could learn the art better by reading and writing scenarios more and more. That is how the scenario is developed.

Q. He must have literary talents too?

A. Yes.

Q. Then the only branch in which special training is necessary is you think in camera work and lighting?

A. Yes, cameramen ought to know that.

Chairman: What about acting?

A. I am very sorry that our actors should learn their acting either from England or America. Our acting must be Indian and it must come from within and not from outside.

Q. As regards facial expression, expression of anger and things of that kind, could we not learn these from others?

A. We cannot express our sentiments in the same way in which the Englishman would express his and if you try to imitate that you would at once spoil the whole thing and it would be ridiculous and people would laugh. The time has come in cinematography for not showing any facial expression. It is done merely by the eyes. Facial expression is now confined to the stage. I am anxious that all expression that comes must be Indian.

Mr. Neogy: Therefore it comes to this that State scholarships should be provided for cameramen alone?

A. Yes.

Q. There is another alternative suggestion that Government should put up a studio here where they should produce propaganda films about public health, education, etc., and that should also be a training ground for the cameramen, directors, actors and other people?

A. It is a good idea.

Q. Do you think you would be able to get real experts to join this institution in India?

A. Yes, if they are paid properly.

Q. Which would you prefer, State scholarships or the other alternative?

A. I would prefer State scholarships.

Q. On what ground?

A. Because that would enable men to be in the actual field of activity.

Q. Supposing you combine both, giving training here in the Government studio under foreign experts employed therein, and then a sort of finishing course on the continent for a short period? Would you approve of that?

A. Yes, in case we have a well equipped training place here with proper experts. But I should prefer the training to be given from start to finish in one place. I like that because of the variety of work that is done in the studio.

Q. Suppose we have a Government studio, how many experts would you bring?

A. I think there must be a director, a cameraman, light expert (light expert means only electrician) and printing and developing expert.

Q. That would be a complete equipment for a Government studio?

A. Yes.

Q. You think the experts whose services are really worth having, should be brought here on a contract basis, say, 2 or 3 years?

A. Yes.

Q. For instance, the people that you have got with you, would they care to stay on on those terms?

A. Not these people, but some people would certainly take to it. People who are really famous they would not care to take to this because they cannot afford to idle away 2 years without producing any outstanding productions.

Q. Would they charge prohibitive salary?

A. No. The pay which the Indian companies pay now are not bad. We have exaggerated ideas of the money that is paid to the film actors and to the cameramen. That is not true. Those are merely published for the public.

Q. Is that also the case in America?

A. Yes.

Q. Which class of experts will be cheaper, German or English.

A. I think it is about the same.

Mr. Green: Mr. Rai, I have found your evidence particularly interesting and to contain many illuminating facts. You are insistent that you must get properly trained men?

A. Yes.

Q. Are you aware at all of the methods of distribution in this country?

A. No, I am not aware. As far as I can make out in most cases each separate producing company tries to exploit its own productions. It does not produce them against guarantees.

Q. Do you think it will be better for them to follow the method you describe of arranging first for exhibition in certain places and obtain financial guarantees?

A. I think that is better because there is a lesser amount of speculation in it.

Q. And it might be possible to get capital on more reasonable terms?

A. Yes.

Q. You think, therefore, it will be possible to organise production and distribution in a better way than leaving it to individual firms?

A. I think so. Co-operation is very necessary. There is no co-operation at present. I have asked some people who are in the line why they did not have a printing organisation and the reply was "Well, if I have a printing organisation, do you think producing syndicates will print their films at my place". And moreover, there is always the fear that it will be copied. Co-operation as they have at present in England, where six most powerful syndicates have joined together, is absolutely necessary in this country also.

Q. Your idea is, that if the 8 or 9 companies in Bombay instead of each having a printing and developing unit, were to unite to form one decent

laboratory, their work would be much more efficient and could be done cheaper?

A. Yes, certainly. As a matter of fact in France and England most of the producing companies have not got their own printing and developing processes. There is a special department in those countries where only the printing work is done.

Q. In other words, you suggest that Trade in India needs more organisation and better business methods?

A. I am hopeful that with the expansion of business it will organise itself better.

Q. I am very much interested in your description of cinematography as an International art?

A. Yes.

Q. I take it that an International art requires an International form of organisation, just as you suggest, in general, and that the Indian industry requires first to organise itself?

A. Yes.

Q. You think it essential for Indian films to secure an International market?

A. Yes, certainly.

Q. Can you think of any way other than that you have suggested?

A. There is no other way unless one is prepared to risk very big sums of money and produce a picture as good as possible and then go to England with some ten thousand pounds, take a cinema house and begin showing there, even at a loss, and try to make the widest possible publicity.

Mr. Neogy: To be your own producer, distributor and exhibitor?

A. Yes.

Mr. Green: If you take your film to one theatre and exhibit it there probably at a loss, how will you exploit that picture thereafter?

A. Then it won't be a success.

Q. You still will have to keep in touch with the distributing agency?

A. Yes.

Q. You said you would be in favour of a Bill like the British Quota Bill for India also?

A. I have not exactly suggested it like that.

Q. Have you any idea of the amount of Indian films now exhibited in this country?

A. I have no definite idea.

Q. To put it this way, what kind of quota would you work up to for Indian films?

A. I have not bestowed much thought on that, but I am most anxious that Indian pictures should be admitted into the British market, and that is why I suggested that as a result of that legislation which has been passed in England, whatever pictures we produce in India should have a preferential claim over German and American pictures shown in Britain. That should be a distinct advantage for us and then the Indian producers should forthwith come in contact with British distribution houses and get their stories accepted by British exhibitors so that they can supply such films as are prepared after that, to the English market.

Q. How will a quota help this country to achieve that object?

A. Well, we can assure a certain amount of British pictures being shown in this country.

Q. Some theatres in this country don't show any Indian films at all, and there are also some houses where Indian films are exclusively shown.

A. If you make a Quota Bill specially for India you will have to raise the percentage of British films that have to be imported into this country.

Q. Already nearly 20 per cent. of the films shown here are Indian, would you raise the percentage to, say, 50?

A. It may be commercially good but artistically it is not a good proposition.

Chairman: You may begin with 30 per cent. and then go on to 50 per cent.?

Mr. Green: Is there not the danger that inefficient films may be produced in that case?

A. Yes, there may be some trouble over that.

Chairman: That was one of the objections taken in England to the English Quota Bill?

A. Yes.

Mr. Green: At present there are only about 350 theatres in this country. You cannot obviously show the same picture in all the theatres. You probably cannot show the same film in more than 150 theatres (including small mofussil stations where there are only small cinema houses). The result is that you can only get a certain return from India, which will in turn limit the amount you could spend on Indian films?

A. Yes, it might be so.

Q. So long as the market is only Indian, will it be possible to produce a film of International value for ten or twenty thousand rupees?

A. No.

Chairman: What will be the lowest cost to produce a picture of International value?

A. We cannot produce a picture for less than ten thousand pounds. Indian conditions are quite different from the West.

Q. That will be a special feature film?

A. Yes, that will be a super-feature production, of about 8,000 to 7,000 feet.

Mr. Green: That will be a lakh and a third as against 15 or 20 thousand rupees that Indian producers now spend on a film?

A. Yes. The greatest artists of America, for example, send out sometimes 5 cameras to work at the same time which in turn means a lot of wastage.

Chairman: What will be the percentage of wastage?

A. We are producing a picture now which will not be more than 6,500 feet in length, but we have already got a stock of a lakh of feet of films.

Mr. Neogy: To produce how many negatives?

A. Two negatives.

Chairman: So, on an average to produce 30 feet of films you will have to use more than 100 feet as waste?

A. Yes.

Mr. Green: If it will cost more than a lakh of rupees to produce a film useful for the International market, it costs very much less to produce a film for the Indian market alone. Then how can the quota help the industry?

A. I don't see your point. I don't see the advantage of having a quota. What I am most anxious is, that at the present stage of the industry in India it should be allowed to go on unhampered without having any legislation even though it may go into the wrong path on some occasions. No limitations of any kind should be imposed at this stage of her industry in India.

Q. I thought you had suggested a Quota Bill for India, and I wanted to clear the point?

A. I made a great mistake in giving you a wrong impression. I wanted the British Quota Bill to be applicable to India, that is all.

Mr. Green: It is already.

Chairman: Do you want India to take British films?

A. I don't object to take 50 per cent. of British films.

Q. There is no compulsion that Britain should show Indian films there? It will only mean British Empire films, that is all?

A. Yes. We are obliged to show British films here, but we could also fulfil the quota by showing Indian films. We will see what the British Trade is going to do for us, to encourage our industry.

Q. I suppose the European and the American markets are wider than the English Market? There are 20,500 theatres in America as against 4,000 in Britain.

A. But there is very little chance for a long time to come for our pictures to get into their market.

Q. This quota would not help you in Europe?

A. We have this distinct advantage that compared to other pictures, German, French and American, Indian pictures also may have a chance to go with them, provided it is made compulsory in England.

Q. If out of the quota of 74 or 20 India is given 21 or 2 or even one, only as a compulsory measure, then the rest of it might be British or South African or Canadian or Australian?

A. Yes.

Mr. Green: You believe that pictures of sufficient merit can be made in India to win a place within the British quota without any compulsion?

A. Yes.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: Why is the name "Shiraz" given to the film? It is a place in Persia.

A. That is the author's fancy.

Q. Only fancy?

A. Yes.

Mr. Neogy: In this play Shiraz is the name of a man.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: You know Madans, I suppose?

A. Yes.

Q. They have got many theatres in India?

A. Yes.

Q. If the concerns of Madans are sold to Americans, Indians will be very sorry.

A. Yes. I myself will be very sorry.

Chairman: Suppose it is sold to English people?

A. In that case too I will be very sorry.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: "The Light of Asia" created a good impression on the Americans and Britishers?

A. Yes. It was not only in America, but throughout Europe. Wherever it was shown it has created a good impression.

Q. In your studios are oriental films being produced?

A. They have been produced for a long time.

Q. People like the oriental films?

A. Yes.

Q. That is why they are producing them?

A. Yes.

Q. You have just said that if this Shiraz is produced the Indian films will have a better chance.

A. Yes.

Q. You have taken up this matter probably in a patriotic view? I mean to say in the view that India will benefit thereby?

A. I do not know what patriotism there is in it. I am working for the development of this country.

Q. Don't you think it would help the development of the Indian industry if you remained in India helping the films here instead of selling your services as the *Chronicle* says here:.....

A. That is absolutely inaccurate. They have no reason to say so. I have brought about a production by which every Indian who is in this work is getting an advantage and at the same time working for the reputation of India.

Q. Yourself and Mr. Pal, I suppose?

A. Myself, Mr. Pal and every other artist who will appear in it. They will get their pay. They will get a reputation throughout the market which will be of very great use to them just in the same manner as myself having produced "The Light of Asia" last time.

Q. Except to three or four of you what is the benefit? India will not be much benefited. She will get, you say, fame. In monetary matters India will not be benefited?

A. She is benefited because India will get future business.

Q. "The Light of Asia" was not enough for India, I suppose, for the other people to know about Indians?

A. I should be very much surprised if it is thought that by producing one picture a country can establish its reputation in the International market when it is generally known that each country is pouring fourth thousands of productions every year. India produced one only for the International market.

Q. If India produces a picture India ought to benefit and not others?

A. That is my point of view too.

Q. If Madans' concerns are sold, as you have said, to America and others, India will be sorry?

A. Yes.

Q. Why should not India stop this production when it does not get any benefit?

A. India is getting very great benefit. If there is a demand created in the International market for Indian productions India is benefited.

Q. We have no Indian productions at all unless you yourself develop. You don't help India in the right way?

A. No production, say, steel or wood, or any other thing can be undertaken unless there is a demand. In the same manner no pictures should be attempted in India unless we are assured that we are going to sell those pictures. Otherwise we will be only wasting the financier's money. For this reason it is of the utmost importance that a demand should be created in the International market for the consumption of Indian pictures. And if that is considered as a service to India, it is the same service that Shiraz is doing. It is creating a public interest.

Q. But why not with Indian capital? Will you be able to do this picture here?

A. To-day I have given an offer to the indigenous Indian financiers: I shall give you similar guarantees as the European buyers. Come forward with your money and with your story. Before we made this "Shiraz" we had been to one of India's prominent financiers.

Q. What is his name?

A. Mr. Birla. He was in England. It is not perhaps his crime. It probably did not suit him at that moment.

J. You say that Indians do not come forward to assist you?

A. In our Shiraz they did not.

Chairman: So far as Indian capital was concerned, "The Light of Asia" was a failure?

A. They should give the proper chance to "The Light of Asia".

Q. They have given two years and yet 50,000 is to be recovered.

A. They have to wait 4 years. The life of a picture is considered to be 5 years.

Q. When that fact remains there we cannot expect Indian financiers to be rushing forward with their money—I mean until they see that the picture is making a profit.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: Seeing that the picture is gaining popularity they have sent you now.

A. I have not been sent by anybody. I am the producer of this picture. I have taken money from a financing corporation. I have my buyers and I engage my artists. It is my production. So it is an Indian production.

Q. But the profit goes to others except to a few of you?

A. I cannot help it. I have no money. I went to one who was not of my nationality to get it. He gave and I am participating in his profits. As he has taken greater risks he is better profited than I am. That is the position.

Q. How to capture the foreign markets? You have told us about "The Light of Asia" and "Shiraz". Is there any other way?

A. The only way is to negotiate with the buyers in different countries.

Q. In what way? Do you suggest that we should negotiate through Trade Commissioners or Consuls?

A. Not through Government agencies. We should negotiate through commercial agencies. There are some buyers.

Q. How are we to approach the buyers?

A. Just as I do.

Q. Do you mean to say that Indians have to go there themselves?

A. Yes.

Q. That will be a very tedious job. Do you suggest any easier way by which that can be done?

A. I cannot. Because every country sends its agents abroad. We have to do the same.

Q. Should not Government employ such agents?

A. Private commercial people should do that. The Government can only, through their Trade Department, and as a reference to the *bona fides* of these people. That is all Government can do. They cannot negotiate the business.

Q. Do you know the picture "Savitri"?

A. Yes.

Q. Was it produced in Italy?

A. Yes.

Q. Had you anything to do with it?

A. No.

Q. That was an Indian picture. That was liked by others.

A. It was never shown except in one or two cinema houses in India and India.

Q. It was not shown in England or America?

A. No.

Q. "Shiraz" is a story from the imagination, is it so? Or is it historical?

A. It is not historical. The author writes the novel. It deals with the Moghul period and that is the only thing historical about it. Otherwise it is only his imagination. It is a sort of a romance which he conceived during his visit to the Taj Mahal.