

- 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.

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?

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 man after having received his training is free to adopt his methods to local needs.

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 14 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

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.
- (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 McLÉOD, 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.

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 complaint 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 something 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.

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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. 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 its 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? I do receive

A. I don't get them. They come to 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?

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.

- 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.

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.

**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 rejected 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 province, 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 contributions 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.

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

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. Coatsman: Is there hookworm in Delhi?

A. No.

Mr. Neogy: Was it produced in Delhi?

- 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.

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.

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 tour.

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?

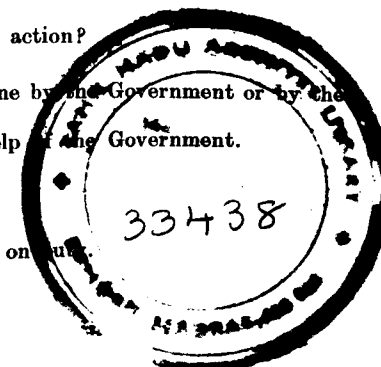
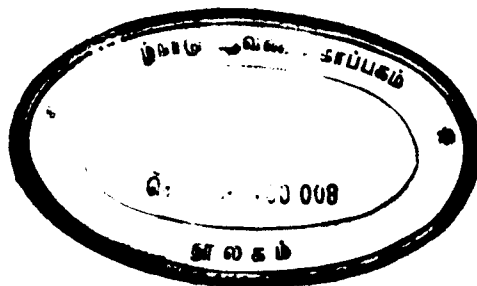
A. They can make profit in about a year's time.

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.



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 an extenuating circumstance?

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.

III

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 Jubhulpore 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 Jubhulpore, 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.

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.

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-

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 in 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 16th 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?

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 of 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.

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 Mohammadaus.

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?

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 1913.

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.

- 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?
- 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.

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.

(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).

33. (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.

34. (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.

35. (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.

tions 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.

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, it would be of some help.

A. In that case, if they had already been censored in Great Britain need not be subjected to strict censorship 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. 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.

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?

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Evidence.

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Part II



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. 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?

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- 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.

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.

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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 other points of view. In some instances, 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.

(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

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 film 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.

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.

(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. 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 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. Nigam: 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?

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 troops and 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. 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 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

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.

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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.

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. 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?

patronize 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.

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 showing 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. Coatman: 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.

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.

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.

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. 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. Jaggat 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?

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. 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"?

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. V. S. VENKATARAMAN, 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?

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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. 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 34 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.

8. 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.

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

10. 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.

11. There is no Amusement Tax in Burma.

12. There is no Amusement Tax in Burma. 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.

13. 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.

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

15. 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.

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

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

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 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 here?

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. 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 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 Misérables". 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

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 Balfour 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.

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. 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?

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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.

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 Medicine. 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?

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. When 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.

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 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?

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 alright.

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. 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. Contman'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?

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.

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.

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

agency 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.

(c) Yes.

(d) 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, hand-bills 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 Cerdova, 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.

B. Selig, 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.

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. 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?
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. 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 Muhammadana.
- 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.

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. 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."

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 de-moralise, 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. 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 more 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

- 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.

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.

Sir 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. 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. 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?

- 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.

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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 lock 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.

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.

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

**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 Shylock.

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".

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.)

Chairman: 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 15 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 a great hero, Peishwa, who died on the battlefield of Panipat. He was kept in prison for a number of years and then proved to be a false person and was 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. Entirely myself and partly the director.

Q. Which company produced it?

A. I do not exactly remember the name; but it was some Deccan company.

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?

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 province?

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

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 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?

- 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. 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. Neogy: 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?

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 do not put 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. 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. Niranjana 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.

- 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 archaeologist 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 profits?
- 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?

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.

- 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 $\frac{1}{2}$ or $\frac{2}{3}$.
- 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

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.

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?

- 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. Y. 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 aratars, 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. 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 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.

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 Ceylonese 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.

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 kulty in your way or in the way of your company?

***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. I 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. 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 deputise 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. O. 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?

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.

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. 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-

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

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. 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 studios 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. 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 peculiarly 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 the 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 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 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.

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. 1-8-0 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.

J. You pointed out that certain parts of Public Health films, the technical as 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 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 *Fathe 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

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. 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, 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. Coatsman: I understand you are one of the pioneers in India in the film producing industry?

A. Yes.

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 a 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 that should be a result of that legislation which has been passed. Whatever pictures we produce in India should have a pre-emptive advantage for us and then the Indian producers should be in contact with British distribution houses and get their films shown by British exhibitors so that they can supply such films as after that, to the English market.

Will a quota help this country to achieve that object?

A. We can assure a certain amount of British pictures being shown in theatres in this country don't show any Indian films at all, and some houses where Indian films are exclusively shown.

Q. 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.

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. Greer: 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 "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.?

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 6,000 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 7½ or 20 India is given 2½ 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. 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.

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 Indian Government can only, through their Trade Department, stand as a reference for 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 also liked by others.

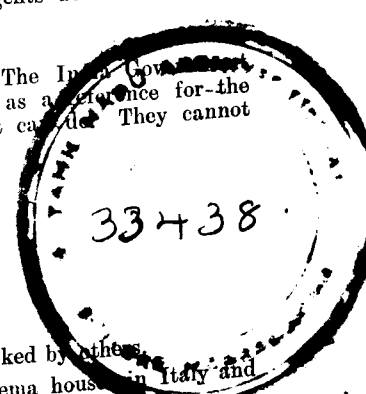
A. It was never shown except in one or two cinema houses in Italy and India.

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.



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 off 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.

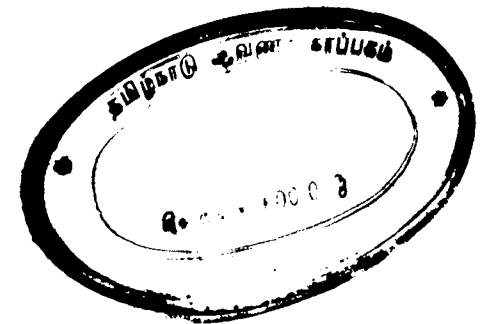
Q. So that the western films can have any influence if at all, only on the European, Anglo-Indian or the educated Indian or Burman?

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.

செப்பனருபவர் பெயர்
தி. திரு. செந்திரன்
 செப்பனருவதற்காக எடுத்துக்
 கொள்ளப்பட்ட நாள். **மார்ச் 1992**
 செப்பனரு முடித்த நாள். **ஏப்ரல் 1992**
 சாபார்க்கும்
 மு. பா. எ.
 கையொப்பம்.
 ஆராய்ச்சு
 உதவியாளர்
 கையொப்பம்



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 Shivaji'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. 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 films?

A. We get a good number of captions in Gujarati, 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.

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.

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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?

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 85 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 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.

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- 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. 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 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.

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 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. 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 expense 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 3½ 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?

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.

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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 would 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?

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

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.

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 honorably. 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 Mohammedan on the Board of Film Censors?

A. I agree to the suggestion that there should be a Hindu and a Mohammedan on the Board.

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.

and Bengal rivers were shown they would focuss their attention on the 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 Napur. 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

- 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. 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 drawing 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 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?

- 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.

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.

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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.

- 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. 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 are also shown. 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. 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.

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.

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 satery 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 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, etc., as well as films certified in other provinces are fit for local exhibition, etc." 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.

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 Jabulpore 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

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 Madans 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.

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 clientele 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 objectionable 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.

- 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 the 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 in 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 cinemas-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.

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. 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 techniques that may be necessary. Which would you prefer on the whole?

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 1923.

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

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?

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. Gesténer 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.

- 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., Counsellor, 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, R. 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?

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

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Q. They don't see the same thing that one could see in the home, or on the street.

A. 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.

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 160 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 patronize 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 masses of 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 profitability, 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.

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 is 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 out 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?

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
Yakl, 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. 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?

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 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 Exoelsior.

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.

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.

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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. Do you go to the mesfaml 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 artists 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 leasehold 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?

- 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. No, on the other hand it has gone down. My father used to get from 100 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 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

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 ₹50 to ₹60. 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 spinning 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,

film stories are love dramas, fictions and fantastic stories. If therefore reality is not shown, it would mean gradual seceding of business. On these grounds we need censoring to be relaxed with the minimum of safeguard.

38. (a), (b), (c) Yes.
 39. 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).]

**General 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:

X 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?

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 1916.

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.

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) "Kalyân Khajinâ."
- (3) "Shâhâjân."
- (4) "Bâjirâo."
- (5) "Padmini."
- (6) "Sant Tukârâm."
- (7) "Lankâ 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.

- 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 Hsun: 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 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 12,600 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. 67. 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 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 Hyun: 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 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 civilization 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 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 that 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 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, 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 as 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. Two

(d) Censorship is adequate in the case of sex films and crime films. The 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 undesirable. 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 $\frac{1}{4}$ 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 topicals which we receive direct.

Q. You get the topicals 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 goodness, 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 $\frac{1}{3}$ 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. Its 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

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 civilization 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 right?
- 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 taxes, 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.

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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 shown 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 Myingya 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 Misérables," "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," "Goolhakavli" 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. Vigile, 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 monopoly, 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 2½ 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 34 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 300 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 backgrounds 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, *vis.*, "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 Budha" 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 a 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.

(1) 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 of 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, handbills 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 Myingyan, 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 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 Doras 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 interfering 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 individual 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 descriptions.

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 5 companies all the films are not up to the mark.

Q. Turning now from that, there is the rest of the world market. There Germany.

A. Germany also is going to the Block-making system. That is due there being in Germany a very powerful producing company and they are setting 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 was that it depicted the story without any subtitles. It was very nice 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 reason". 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, his 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 complementary 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 are 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 Mr. 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?

I did at one time, i.e., during the time of the war. I was virtually the 'Empire' from 1900 till about 5 years ago when it ceased work-

And how long were you concerned with that?

Practically for about 15 or 16 years.

For the last 5 years you have not been concerned with the trade. So experience is 5 years old?

But I have been in touch with some of the Burmese producers.

Do you think the Burmese productions are getting popular?

At present there is a craze for Burmese pictures of all kinds, good, and indifferent.

What do you think that craze is due to?

I think it is due to the political transition that is going on in Burma.

You mean political transition accounts for this taste?

Yes. You see the Burmans started politics only a few years back and 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.

Do you go to the Burmese films often?

Yes. The Burmese film industry is in its infancy. There are lots of mistakes and I am trying my level best to give them advice in the matter.

So you continue to be interested in the industry?

Yes.

Now what do you think are their requirements,—where the Government can help them?

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 which ships found by Government, it would improve the industry. A year's course will be quite sufficient.

So that those who are already employed in the industry may be sent to learn better methods? That is your idea?

I think so. That is one idea. I think there ought to be a Board or sort of a place where they would get expert advice.

A studio in which experts are engaged, where they can get expert advice whenever they want and those who want?

I think they will want it. The Burmese conception is that we live to and we do not learn to live.

You want a Government studio to be employed in producing public and films such as hygiene, public health and various other films. Want the Government studio for that purpose and then the experts employed by private producers for their own purposes? If need be, advice to be given at a nominal price not at a commercial or economic price?

A. Yes.

Q. Yes. You think it essential that the Government should do this in order that the industry may thrive on proper lines?

part from that I should like to see that the Burmans do not get their own English pictures. This they are now doing against my advice. They got legends and we are so akin—Hindus and Buddhists—in our traditions and legends. There are hundreds and thousands of legendary stories which we can draw plots and our producers do not like to do that.

That is because educated people are not in it?

I think so. I think it would be a good thing if our plots and scenarios were submitted before the Censorship Board before the pictures are actually taken. Do you think it would be wise to do so? Don't you think the secret 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 purposefully 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 English-men 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 Culture, 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.

A. All will appeal to both the classes.

Q. Do not know.

A. I considering the short period of its existence. There is also much improvement.

Q. 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), (e) 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 res 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.

One
 Indian

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 want 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.

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 1928.**

- 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, Patho 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 230 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. Whenever 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 in 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 the 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 "bit 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 as

stand at present. Burman films won't have a commercial value outside Burma.

Q. So that any participation in the Imperial Preference scheme will 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 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 rate 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 could 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 100 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 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 the younger generation will welcome it. The older people might have the 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 lend 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? 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 our 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-

and Western, Indian and Chinese pictures. Burmese pictures they can
 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 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 picture 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?

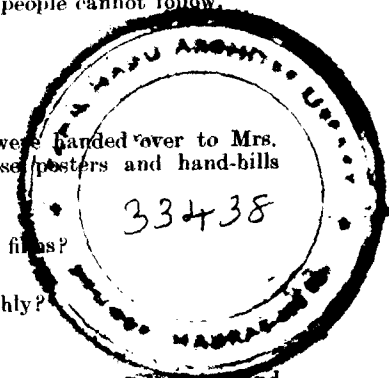
A. On a 50 per cent. basis. All advertisement charges are to be borne by me. It was not a very good audience and the photography also was not good.

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 cinémas 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 Mrs. 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. 4,000, 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 su 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 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 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?

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 the 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 Burmians 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 Burmians 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. Burmians 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 Burmians 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.

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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 nature before going?

which they go to see considered

A. We can only see

Q. Is it your experience that 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?

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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 alright.

Mr. Neggy: 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. Then you have 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 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 story

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?

III

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 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 Burman 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 the school authorities are asked to co-operate there would be some facilities 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?

3A

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 Schews 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 theatre?

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 Burmans 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 Crawford: 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 1928.**

- 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?

- ci 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. You 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. I do not think so.

Q. Is the poison working very slowly?

A. So far I have not come across any case like that.

Q. But 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.

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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?

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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 gets 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 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 rest 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 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?

al. 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 severally 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 film popularity?

A. Just what 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 8 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 where 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, Prome 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. 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 those 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 bad decoys to the exhibitors for which they will be required to book several 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 66½ 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.