

CONFIDENTIAL.]

INDIAN CINEMATOGRAPH COMMITTEE

1927—1928

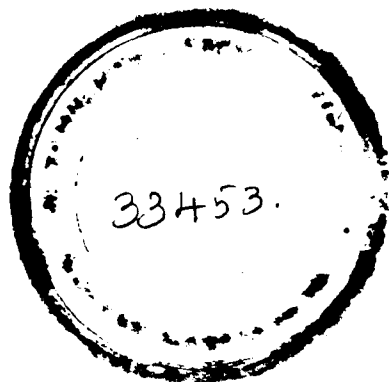
Volume V.

Oral Evidence
of
Witnesses examined *in camera*
with the Written Statement of Mr. Tipnis ;
the Memorandum of the Government of Burma ;
and the Chairman's Inspection Notes
on Cinemas and Studios visited.



CALCUTTA: GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
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Volume V.
(Confidential.)

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Witnesses.

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INDIAN CINEMATOGRAPH COMMITTEE.

QUESTIONNAIRE.

INSTRUCTIONS.

If you are willing to answer any of the questions kindly send your reply as soon as possible to the Secretary, Indian Cinematograph Committee, whose address will be c/o Presidency Postmaster, Bombay (up to 18th November); and thereafter c/o Postmaster, General Post Office, Lahore (up to 30th November); and thereafter c/o Home Department, Delhi.

INTRODUCTORY.

1. Have you any special knowledge of, or connection with the Cinematograph Industry either in India or abroad? If so, what?

GENERAL.

2. (a) In your experience to what extent do Indians (1) of the educated classes and (2) of the illiterate classes frequent Cinemas? To what extent is such attendance on the increase? (Please explain to what place or area your answer refers.)

(b) Can you give an idea of the composition of an average Cinema audience in the locality of which you can speak?

(c) What proportion of the audience consists of children under 14 or adolescents of impressionable age?

PART I.

Film Industry in India.

3. Have you any opinion as to what classes of films are the most popular with Indian audiences and generally in India?

4. Are the exhibitors catering adequately for Indian audiences? If not, what are the reasons?

5. Are Indian-produced films, depicting Indian life, readily available to exhibitors? If so,

(a) are they of good quality?

(b) are they popular?

(c) is it ordinarily less or more profitable to show an Indian than a Western film? Can you cite any examples of successful Indian films?

6. (a) Do you think that films of Indian life, topical Indian news, and scenes (with Indian actors) depicting stories from the national literature, history and mythology, would be more popular with Indian audiences than the prevalent Western films?

(b) Of such films, what kind would appeal most strongly

(1) to the educated classes,

(2) to the illiterate population?

7. Is difficulty experienced in obtaining suitable films for exhibition to the British and Indian Troops? If so, in what way exactly are the films unsuitable? What sort of films are both suitable and popular?

8. (a) Are you satisfied with the present condition of the Industry in this country in its several branches of production, distribution and exhibition?

(iv)

(b) If you are not satisfied, what in your opinion are the main difficulties besetting the Industry and what means would you suggest for assisting it?

9. Are good films readily obtainable by exhibitors at reasonable prices?

If not, is there any special reason for this?

Is there any monopoly or tendency to monopoly of the supply or exhibition of films?

10. Do the systems of "block" and "blind" booking and of "first run" or "key theatres" exist in India?

If so, explain the advantages and disadvantages thereof to the Trade and the Public?

11. Have the exhibitors in this country sufficient facilities for previewing films?

Have you any suggestions to make on this matter?

12. To what extent is the Amusement Tax (where it exists) a handicap to the exhibitor?

13. How does the present Customs Tariff on imported films affect the exhibitors? How far is it useful for promoting the indigenous production of films? What suggestions have you to make regarding the Tariff generally on all materials connected with the Film Industry?

14. Do you consider that an increased use of the Cinema for educational purposes in schools and for adult education in Agriculture, Public Health, etc., by Government or other agencies would help the growth of the film industry in this country?

Is there any demand for such films?

15. Are conditions in this country favourable to development of an Indian film-producing industry on a large scale?

What are the reasons for your opinion?

16. Do you consider that there are Indian producers, directors, actors, actresses and scenario-writers of sufficient technical knowledge, enterprise, resource and adaptability on whom the country can depend for a substantial output of films of real competitive exhibition value?

What measures would you suggest to supply a deficiency?

17. Do you consider that sufficient capital in India is or will be forthcoming for film-production?

18. Do you consider that suitable Government action whether legislative or administrative may be an effective incentive and encouragement to private enterprise for film-production? Can you suggest what suitable action can be taken by Government?

19. How does the cost of film-production in this country compare with that in other countries?

20. (a) Do any of your proposals involve expenditure from Government funds? If so, do you think that such expenditure is justifiable, having regard to the other needs of the country?

(b) Have you any suggestions to make regarding the sources from which such expenditure may be met?

21. What is your opinion regarding a proposal which has been made that to ensure the production and exhibition of films conforming to moral standards, to provide a centralised neutral distributing agency and furnish a fair market, and to inaugurate the use of teaching and propaganda films, and generally to improve the conditions of the Film Industry in all its aspects, including censorship, a State agency should be created to undertake the management of the Film Industry as a monopoly?

Films of the British Commonwealth.

22. Should India participate in the policy outlined in the resolution of the Imperial Conference to give some measure of encouragement to British Empire films, and if so, would such participation

(a) assist the development of her own film industry,

(v)

(b) assist in making herself better known and understood throughout the Empire and the world, and

(c) improve the standard of Western films shown in India.

Have you any suggestions as to the methods of putting such a policy into practice and the limitations if any?

23. (a) To what extent can cinema pictures be used for making known the conditions, resources and habits of the peoples, and the activities of the various Governments, of the British Commonwealth of Nations to each other?

(b) What measures would you suggest for getting the various Governments to co-operate to this end?

PART II.

Social Aspects and Control.

24. (a) Do you consider that any class of films exhibited in this country has a demoralising or otherwise injurious effect upon the public?

(b) Is there a general circulation of immoral or criminally suggestive films?

(c) In your opinion what class of film is harmful? To whom is it harmful? In what way is it harmful?

(d) Consider specifically whether censorship is adequate in the cases of

(1) "Sex" films,

(2) "Crime" films.

(e) Do you consider there has been any increase of crime in your Province due to the Cinema?

(f) Support your statements wherever possible by instances within your personal knowledge.

25. Do you consider that the differences in social customs and outlook between the West and the East necessitate special consideration in the censorship of films in this country?

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

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

27. (a) Have any of the films exhibited in India a tendency to misrepresent Western civilization or to lower it in the eyes of Indians? Is it a fact that films representing Western life are generally unintelligible to an uneducated Indian or are largely misunderstood by him? If so, do undesirable results follow from this? Have you any suggestions to make on this point?

(b) Do you know of any films exhibited abroad which have a tendency to misrepresent Indian civilisation? If so, were they produced in India?

28. Has any class of film shown in this country a bad effect on—

(a) children,

(b) adolescents.

If so—

(1) what class of film?

(2) in what way is it harmful?

29. Are you in favour of certification of certain films as "For Adults Only"?

30. Are you in favour of prohibiting all children below a certain age from visiting Cinemas except for special "Children's Performances"? If so, why? What age do you suggest?

31. Do you consider that censorship is an effective method of guarding against misuse of the film?

32. Do you think that the present system of Censorship in your Province is satisfactory? If not, in what way is it defective? Can you suggest any improvement?

33. Would a strict censorship—

- (a) interfere unreasonably with the recreations of the people?
- (b) involve a falling off in the attendance at Cinemas?
- (c) unduly interfere with the freedom required for artistic and inspirational development?

34. (a) Do you advocate the replacement of the present Provincial Boards of Censors by a single Central Board?

- (1) If so, why?
- (2) Would this cause any inconvenience to the Trade?
- (3) How should such a Central Board be constituted?
- (4) Where should it be situated?

(b) Or, would you advocate a Central Board in addition to the Provincial Boards?

(c) If you advocate a Central Board working either alone or with Provincial Boards, how would you regulate the relationship between the various Boards and the Central and Local Governments?

(d) How should such a Board or Boards be financed?

35. (a) Is the present constitution of the Provincial Boards (of which at least half the Members must, under the law, be non-officials) satisfactory?

(b) Would you prefer a whole-time experienced well-paid officer as Censor at each centre, to be assisted by an Advisory Board of non-officials?

36. (a) Do you think that the present system (prevailing at Bombay and Calcutta) under which films are ordinarily examined by inspectors subordinate to the Board is satisfactory? Are such inspectors sufficiently well qualified for the work? What sort of qualifications are essential?

(b) Or do you think that all films should be examined by Members of the Board? If so, do you consider that gentlemen of suitable standing will be available who would be prepared to devote sufficient time to the examination of films for a reasonable remuneration?

37. (a) Are there adequate safeguards under the Act for preventing the exhibition of a film which may be objectionable locally although it has been passed by a Board in some other part of India?

(b) Do you consider that any safeguards are needed?

38. Do you know any instances of films which have been passed by a Board of Censors in one Province and found objectionable in another Province?

39. Have you come across any instances of pictures disapproved or banned from exhibition in the country of origin or in Great Britain being exhibited in India?

40. Should posters, handbills and advertisements of Cinema performances also be censored? What measures would you suggest for such censorship without undue restriction on freedom?

Have you noticed any such advertisements which were objectionable? In what way were they objectionable?

41. Have you noticed any improvement in the moral standard of the films exhibited in India in recent years?

42. Have you any suggestions to make for getting the co-operation of the trade in the matter of the censorship?

43. (a) Is there need for a stricter control over the import and export of films?

(b) If so, why?

(c) What methods should be adopted for this purpose?

44. To what extent could public bodies and the Press assist in maintaining a good standard of films?

45. (a) Should some control be exercised by Government over film-production, and if so, what should be the nature of such control?

(b) Should all film-producing agencies be registered and licensed, and their studios periodically inspected?

The Oral Evidence (taken in camera) of Miss RUBY MYERS, Actress, Imperial Film Co., on Saturday, the 12th November 1927.

Chairman: And what do you think should be done to make it [filming] more attractive?

A. Well, I think if we were financed properly, if there were some technical improvements and if there were some way of getting fairly good stories—if we could get stories like Tagore's and some others, which I know would appeal to the educated classes—our stories at present are very poor. We want better stories either taken from the ancient books or good modern authors.

Q. You want more literary effort in that direction?

A. Yes. And of course, the studios are quite good in the present conditions. That is, things being what they are, they are quite good.

Q. Although you would like to have them improved, you would not insist on it at the present stage? What I want to know really is whether for the educated classes and also for girls of good family the conditions in the studios are sufficiently attractive.

A. Not just yet.

Q. I mean, let us be frank with each other. The girls who go there now more or less do not come from the respectable classes?

A. Well, what I see of them, they are very respectable company. They behave very well and they work very well.

Q. Although they may have come from the lower class?

A. I don't think they have come from a very low class. Most of them are very very good company.

Q. I mean taking things as they are, there is not much room for complaint? You are fairly satisfied with the conditions in the studios?

A. Fairly. I have worked in three so far.

Q. And you don't think there is anything to take exception to?

A. I mean, there may be one or two things which may be improved, but really the conditions of life are not bad.

Q. I am glad to hear that. And what about the pay?

A. Well, I think for this kind of work the pay is very good. If of course the pictures bring in more money, I am sure the producers would be very willing to help us.

Q. So there is nothing to complain of in that direction?

A. No, we are quite satisfied. I think that the stars and all the actors are quite satisfied with what they get.

Q. But it will improve matters if there are good story writers.

A. Yes.

Q. And what about technique?

A. Well, the story writers do not know the technique for the film. They just write the story out and it is the director who helps to make the scenario.

Q. Would it be an advantage if girls like you were given a six months' course or one year's course of training in England?

A. It would be a great advantage for us; and even for the actors I think, because we lack in actors more.

Q. Now you learn your art more from seeing the screen?

A. Yes, from studying the western pictures. Of course, it has been my ambition from my childhood to become a film star. The first opportunity I got to enter the profession I availed myself of.

Q. And I suppose there must be several such people who, if given an opportunity, would be willing to do it.

A. I receive many letters from up-country asking to join, whether it is good for them to join, from students and others.

Q. From what class?

A. Well, from their letters they must be a very good class. From Muhammadans mostly, and I have had one or two Anglo-Indian girls who wanted to join.

Q. From the actors and actresses' point of view, do you think any class here for training would be well attended? You must have very good experts to teach. Do you think you can get the experts?

A. I think at present it would be waste of time. Because at present there are very few people who know about this art. What I find is that the few directors alone know about it.

Q. You mean you cannot get trained people here?

A. No. I have never come across anybody who could give the training.

Q. So you think it would be a good plan to send for a good trainer here, to be loaned to the producing companies?

A. I think it would be a good thing.

Q. Do you think that these places where Indian films are produced should be licensed or should come under any system of issuing a licence for opening studios?

Mr. Neogy: Please explain the purposes for which you suggest it to be done.

Chairman: To see that the conditions of living are all right. In the city where there are studios, do you think they should be licensed at all?

A. I do not think so.

Q. Now, of course, that is a matter which we must put to politicians—I don't want to trouble you with a political question. Is there anything else you want to bring to the notice of the company? You know the objects of this committee. Do you think there is anything which you would like to place before the committee?

A. No, I have nothing else to say.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: These people, the directors and proprietors and producers, don't want to give out the secrets of their trade to anyone else at present. They are anxious to keep it to themselves, and therefore they don't want to train anybody except their own people.

A. I don't know very much about that. On the contrary I think they would help others to train.

Q. Would they like other companies started against them?

A. No.

Q. I want to know whether we should wait for the people to train themselves or whether you want Government to help the trade to produce better pictures.

A. Well, I think we are quite all right.

Q. You don't want an up-to-date studio started by Government for the use of these producers and others. You don't like the idea?

A. No.

Q. There is an impression now that whatever actresses are in the studio at present are from an undesirable class. Is that right?

A. No, I don't think so because most of them are very respectable and don't behave like that in company.

Q. What pay do you get yourself?

A. Rs. 750, with a car.

Q. Is it a good pay?

A. I think so. It is quite a good pay. It would be increased if the pictures went well. It depends on the pictures.

Q. If you are sent, you would like to go and be trained?—a trip to England?

A. Well, I would only like to be trained for the benefit of the Indian industry.

Q. Of course, you would then come back and help the industry here.

A. That I would not mind.

Mr. Coatman: I think you said, Miss Myers, that you have been in this employment about 2 years.

A. Yes.

Q. Have you been with the same producing company the whole time?

A. No. I was one year with the Kohinoor and I worked a picture for the Orient; the rest of the time I have been with the Imperial.

Q. You have had no difficulty in getting employment?

A. No, I find no difficulty.

Q. Had you any difficulty in the first place in getting employment?

A. You see I was working in the telephone company when my photographer happened to see my photograph and I think he had a play made for me which was my first play and he thought I could do something. He asked me and I got my opportunity.

Q. Have you acted in any plays with other actresses?

A. Yes. I have acted with one of the stars of the Kohinoor, Miss Gohur.

Q. You have acted with European actresses and Indian actresses—both?

A. No, not European. Only Indian. Except in my picture "The Telephone Girl" where we had a few English actresses—a nurse I think.

Q. And did they also like the work?

A. Yes.

Q. And these other actresses with whom you acted, who were they?

A. They were Indians.

Q. I mean these Indian ladies.

A. Well they were ladies of different castes—Hindus and Muhammadans. Of course, they are very respectable.

Q. Any of them married?

A. Most of them are married in the Kohinoor Company.

Q. You are in constant employment? You have had no difficulty in finding employment?

A. No.

Q. Are there more calls made on you than you can cope with? I mean there is full employment for you?

A. Oh, yes.

Q. Would you say then that there is scope for more ladies in the profession here?

A. Yes, there are heaps of scope, if they would only come.

Q. Then is there scope for Anglo-Indian girls and European girls as well as Indian girls?

A. I do not think they would be able to do the Indian girl. It was a bit hard for me at first. I have been so much with Indians that I seem to get their habits and behaviour.

Q. You mentioned a film, "The Telephone Girl". Was that an Indian film?

A. It was Indian in a way. It was about an Anglo-Indian girl who ultimately turned out to be an Indian girl. It was meant to appeal to an Indian audience. And it did appeal to them.

Q. Have you acted in any plays that were meant to appeal to European audiences?

A. No, I don't think so, except "Sacrifice".

Q. Well, you say there is scope for more actresses, but I take it those actresses must be Indian actresses. There is scope for Indian actresses.

A. Yes.

Q. Then for future Indian actors, do you think a training institution would be a good thing?

A. Well, if they have got any artistic instinct in them, if they can work, there is no need for it.

Chairman: Have you seen "Savitri" screened here?

A. No.

Mr. Neogy: Had you any experience of acting on the stage before you came to your present profession?

A. Not, except in my school days.

Q. There is a good deal of difference between acting on the stage and acting on the screen?

A. A very vast difference.

Q. But do you think that those who have been a success, or rather those who have got a talent for acting, on the stage have an initial advantage for the screen?

A. Yes, I think so. Because Mr. Kambatta was a very well-known stage actor who acted in "Sacrifice" and he has done well. I expect at moments you can find out such movements.

Q. So you think that the present stage furnishes a good training ground, from that point of view for film actors and actresses?

A. I think it would, if they worked hard.

Chairman: But only to-day I saw a press cutting in one of the Bombay papers that the two things are totally different.

Mr. Neogy: True. She admits it. But they are allied, and those who have a liking for the stage could more easily take to the screen.

A. It would be hard for them at first but they would succeed, if they were directed well.

Q. They would be in a better position than people going directly to screen acting.

A. Yes, they would understand better.

Q. You said a lot of Anglo-Indian girls and others have made inquiries from you about this profession. Do you think it is really very difficult for an Anglo-Indian girl—I am not talking of the European for the time being—to adapt herself to Indian ways and interpret Indian ideas?

A. It is not very difficult if she has got the knack of walking and behaving like an Indian—just as I do.

Q. It is not an insuperable difficulty?

A. No.

Q. We were told that there is an Anglo-Indian girl who has made a great success of a film in Calcutta.

A. I have not seen her act.

Colonel Crawford: Miss Myers, I want to examine you from the point of view of the actors and actresses only. Are you satisfied that there is a sufficiency of material to make suitable actors and actresses in India?

A. I think so.

Q. You are getting a sufficiency of proper people at present?

A. Well, I think so. I have had that experience and I have done well in it.

Q. You think there are plenty of good actors and actresses available?

A. I think so.

Q. You have given me the idea that the subjects of the films and the technique are not good enough at present for the expansion of the industry. With your present personnel, are the actors and actresses up to the work of producing better films?

A. Most of them I think are.

Q. Undoubtedly individuals would be, but do you think the majority would be?

A. Most of them would be. If they had a good story, I think most of them would work for it.

Q. Sufficiently to be attractive abroad?

A. Yes, if the director is there and the producer spends the money, I don't see why we can't do it.

Q. And are there any comic actors available?

A. Yes, we have them.

Q. I have not seen a comic Indian scene,—not the type of Harold Lloyd.

A. Oh, no.

Q. Well now, what are the conditions under which you work at present. You contract for whole-time work for certain producing companies?

A. Well, this is the first time I have made a contract. As a rule I never make contracts.

Q. You prefer to make contracts for a particular picture?

A. No, I don't for a particular picture. Lately I have made it for six months or for six pictures.

Q. And you are open after that to take on a contract anywhere you like?

A. Oh, yes.

Q. But you are satisfied that you yourself have a chance to make your own conditions wherever you like. Under existing conditions, you can contract where you like and for any pictures you like?

A. The moment my work finishes.

Q. The terms of the contract you don't consider are disadvantageous from the actor's point of view. Can you give me an idea of the salaries of actors?

A. I know one actress who gets Rs. 1,200 a month. Some get a thousand. Some of them have been four or five years in service.

Q. Those are your stars. But what does a beginner get?

A. It all depends. To tell you the truth, I don't know how others have begun, but as for me I began on Rs. 150 and when the producer saw that I could work for my first picture he gave me a rise of another Rs. 100 on his own account and in two years I have risen to Rs. 750.

Q. You think, so far as salaries are concerned, that educated people would be able to get salaries that would attract them?

A. Yes, if the company could afford to pay them.

Q. Now you are getting down to it. That is rather the point I want to get at. Have Indian producers an opportunity to make good films?

A. They have the best opportunity. It is only the finance that they want.

Q. But can they get a return of money in India to pay these big salaries?

A. Well, if the picture goes well and the story is good, I don't see why they shouldn't.

Q. Don't you think the type of films you are producing is rather a cheap type?

A. Well, it appeals to the Indians very much.

Q. Quite well enough? There is no necessity to produce anything more expensive?

A. Well, no. If you make an expensive film or a cheap film, if they think the story is good they will like it.

Q. But what I want to get at is if the majority of the films produced by these companies to-day are what I would call the cheaper type of films?

A. Well, I know they spend lots of money on some films.

Q. But what is the proportion?

A. I think on one film they spent Rs. 40,000. Of course, I have not pried into their private affairs.

Q. I don't want to pry in any way. I just want to find out whether there is an opportunity for bigger salaries.

A. Yes, there is.

Mr. Green: I understand, Miss Myers, that you like the work it interests you and you don't find it too hard?

A. Yes.

Q. You get fairly long hours?

A. Yes, if there is work you have to be working from 10 to 6. Sometimes we work every day.

Q. I should like to try and get from you the elements that go to make a good actor or actress?

A. One must have a natural intelligence.

Q. I take it that if one had the advantage of a good education coupled with natural intelligence, it would be better?

A. Yes, quite so.

Q. You were educated in Bombay?

A. Yes.

Q. When you have got a good education and natural intelligence, I understand that a good director also has a lot to do in making the play a success?

A. Yes.

Q. You have told us that there is plenty of raw materials in the way of actors and actresses in the making among Indians?

A. Yes.

Q. But is it not a little bit difficult to induce Indian ladies to come forward and take part in theatres?

A. They are rather shy, but I think some of them are getting over it.

Q. What about education?

A. I know four or five of them have not had any education worth the name, and yet they have sufficient intelligence and natural intelligence and do very well as actresses.

Q. Would that not apply to male actors as well?

A. Most of the male actors are not educated; only very few are educated, but if they had education they could act better. But we are quite satisfied with their present acting even though some of them are not educated.

Q. You think that the innate capacity of a man to act is more important when you say that some actors are not educated and yet are really very good actors?

A. They do their work well.

Chairman: Most of the male actors you refer to, I suppose, behave well, is it not?

A. Yes.

Mr. Coatsman: You know that in England and other countries people take to the theatrical profession merely for the love of acting. Have you met any people of that kind in this country, I mean people taking to the profession for the mere love of it?

A. I have met some uneducated persons.

Q. I am thinking of the females?

A. It is so very difficult for the European or Anglo-Indian girls to come into this profession. But some of the Indian ladies would do very well as they have got lovely long hair.

Colonel Crawford: There are no difficulties in the way of getting actors and actresses?

A. No, none.

Q. Have you any suggestions to make so as to make the conditions better for the actors and actresses?

A. I have no suggestions to make.

The Oral Evidence (in camera) of Mr. K. DWARKADAS, on Sunday, the 13th November 1927.

Chairman: I think you once made a statement in the Bombay Legislative Council and I see it is repeated in one of the answers either in your memorandum or in the memorandum of the Vigilance Association, that you believe that a certain amount of obscene films are being circulated in the Indian States. Can you give us any instance?

A. I was certainly informed that the Indian films which were made . . .

Q. Indian films? Or are they foreign?

A. Foreign films and the Indian films that were made here went to the Indian States. I have not said that in a speech. I must have said so to somebody.

Q. It was referred to as having been a question or something else in the Legislative Council and your name was prominently mentioned there. Can you give us any information about it?

A. I think if I try to find out, I can get the names of the people who made the films here. The two films are Indian and these same people were responsible for the exhibition of the foreign films also.

Q. What we are anxious to find out is whether the Indian States get a consignment of these films direct or get them through Bombay, not for public exhibition but for private circulation?

A. They found their way, I was told, through some Maharajah or Rajah.

Q. You cannot give us more detailed information about it?

A. They were made here at one of the studios at Santa Cruz.

Q. One thing is some were made in India. What about importing from abroad?

A. I know that films were imported and shown at one of the cinema theatres in Bombay at 12 noon, and then they found their way into the Indian States.

Colonel J. D. Crawford: The case you mentioned is one of six years ago?

A. Yes, five years ago.

Q. You have no later information?

A. No, except that I know that one or two people in Bombay had those films and showed them in private houses.

Q. Do you know that such films are imported and shown in private houses in Bombay now?

A. I do not know if they are imported.

Q. You know that such films are made somewhere and are being shown in private houses now?

A. I heard about two years ago, and the gentleman who had these films is since dead. He was a young man, younger than myself, and belonged to the same community.

Q. I suppose it is a very rare case?

A. Yes.

Mr. Coatman: If you come across any definite information about the making of an obscene film for private exhibition, you would be prepared to warn the police?

A. Yes. Even the last time I took a considerable risk because those people

Chairman: It is a very unpleasant duty.

A. Yes. But I would not shirk my duty.

Q. It is very easy to say you may complain to the police. But if I were there I would be in the same difficulty. Those men may be your own friends

A. One can get information only through friends.

Chairman: Thank you. You have been very candid and we admire it.

Oral Evidence of Miss G. MULLAH at Bombay, on Friday, the 18th November 1927.

Miss G. Mullah was called and examined in camera.

Chairman: You are a resident of Bombay?

A. Yes.

Q. Are you a frequent visitor to the cinemas?

A. Yes.

Q. You have seen both western films and Indian films?

A. I have seen both.

Q. I suppose you have seen more western films than Indian films? I suppose you have seen a fair amount of Indian films?

A. Yes.

Q. What is your impression as to the effect produced by the western films on the Indian mind?

A. It is quite for the good.

Q. Do you think it has any harmful influence on the Indian public so far as you know?

A. No, not very much, but such scenes as the opening out of boxes and safes and getting inside a house and things like that have harmful effects.

Q. The social side of it is not harmful at all?

A. Not at all, because everybody should see both the good and the bad, that itself is a very good educator.

Q. Do many ladies of your acquaintance take that view?

A. Yes. I have got quite a number of Hindu and Mussulman lady friends and they all take the same view.

Q. I suppose you represent the advanced class of educated ladies?

A. How am I to say that?

Q. Is the censoring all right?

A. The only thing is in some pictures the end is cut off. I do not know whether the censors cut it or the picture was made like that, but the end is absolutely changed. The story of Adam Bede is that the girl is hanged at the end. Instead of that they marry her at the end.

Mr. Green: That was the fault of the producer. Was it English or American?

A. I think it was an English film, and that part was changed completely. Look at the picture called Hasan, or the Lady of the Harem.

Chairman: Do you think there is too much censoring in it?

A. The production is so silly that there is no sense in the film.

Q. Have you travelled in the west?

A. No, unfortunately not.

Q. Strict censorship you think will entail more harm than good?

A. I think so. It will change the meaning completely of some of the stories, and it will do more harm.

Q. I suppose you agree that the presence of some ladies on the Censor Board will be good?

A. I don't think it is necessary, because sometimes some of them might take a narrow point of view.

Q. Probably the social workers are of that class?

A. Not all, though some of them do more harm than good.

Q. Do you think that such pictures as you have seen are fairly good?

A. Some of them are quite good but many productions have been ridiculous and an improvement is certainly needed. If there are good Indian films, I do not see why they should not be shown in the west.

Q. You think our boys and girls will go to Indian films?

A. Certainly if the Indian films are done well. There are some lovely Indian stories, and they are likely to bring about a better understanding between the east and the west.

Q. Do you think girls of your class will come forward for making the industry successful?

A. There will be difficulties in the beginning.

Q. You think if improvement is effected in the surroundings and general atmosphere, educated people will come forward?

A. Educated people will come forward willingly. At present producers have got to make the actors and actresses out of absolutely ignorant people, who do not know how to act, and you have got to teach them how to act. If better conditions are produced, a better class of people will come forward, and I think it is essential that the conditions should be improved as India is being a little bit misunderstood in the west.

Q. You think that Government should embark upon assisting the industry and take definite steps in that direction?

A. That view is taken by some of the younger generation, both boys and girls.

Examined by Mr. Green.

Q. I take it that you do view with a little suspicion people who are too busy with other peoples' affairs? In other words, you are frightened of cranks?

A. Yes.

Q. That is why you oppose any radical alteration in the censorship of films?

A. Yes.

Q. I don't expect you know the actual composition of the Censorship Board. It is a body composed of 6 gentlemen, a Muhammadan, a Hindu, a Parsee and some Government officers. They don't ordinarily see the films

themselves, but they have paid inspectors to see the films, and the Board is called in only if there is a doubt. You think the results obtained at present are satisfactory?

A. I think so. Though sometimes a bit confused.

Q. If you expanded the Board and had a lot of people on it, it wouldn't do much good?

A. Perhaps the censorship will become more confused than at present.

Examined by Colonel Crawford.

Q. Are you quite satisfied with the standard of films to-day?

A. They could be better.

Q. You think that films showing debauchery and things like that produce a harmful effect?

A. I don't think they are harmful, if they don't go beyond a limit.

Q. You don't think that pictures depicting kissing are harmful?

A. As a matter of fact, the more the boys and girls are made to see such pictures the better. It will satisfy their curiosity. I know for example of a cousin of mine who is about 16 years of age. He had some curiosity to see pictures showing kissing. He was shown a few such films, and after that he declined to see any more. He did not want to see such pictures even if he was paid a lakh of rupees.

Chairman: Then you think it is far better to satisfy their curiosity?

A. Yes.

Q. You carry a wise head on young shoulders. Thank you, Miss Mullah, for the trouble you have taken in coming and giving evidence before us.

Oral Evidence of Mr. S. D. PURI, Proprietor of the Gaiety Theatre, and Mr. RAM PERSHAD, Proprietor of the Star Theatre (who was accompanied by the Manager of the Star Theatre), on Saturday, the 26th November 1927.

* * * * *

Colonel Crawford: I notice you make a great complaint against free tickets. Do you give a number of complimentary tickets?

A. Well, about 25 per cent. of the house is free.

Chairman: As much as that? Who are the people?

A. The railways, the police, the municipality, the Electric Supply Company, the press, etc.

Q. Why have you to give tickets to the railways free?

A. Well, I get a parcel of my films coming from Bombay or Calcutta; my man goes to the railway station to get delivery of it, the parcel clerk, if my man goes at 10 o'clock, gives him the parcel at 4 in the afternoon. I cannot go and make a complaint about it: he would tell his officer he was busy, he had to finish the work he had in hand. And that is what generally happens, and I have got to give him a pass—not for himself but for his relatives and friends. When it goes back, the seal is not right, this note is not properly filled in, do this and do that. And if I report or take severe action, the same thing happens and I cannot go before the Station Superintendent over and over again, so to facilitate matters I make a compromise by giving him passes.

Then comes the municipality. Octroi. When I have taken delivery of the parcel from the railway station I have got to pass the octroi barrier. Go and get a carpenter and open these boxes, I must see each and every bit of the film. Delay. I must make a compromise and give him a pass.

Mr. Green: Won't Mr. Puri allow us to publish this? It might help to solve his difficulties.

A. It will be fatal to my business.

Then there is the Electric Supply Company. We have got to pay for the current—they don't give us any concession, as is done in Bombay. That means another pass. If I don't give them passes, they put in a weak fuse; my show starts and in about 10 or 20 minutes the fuse blows out. I telephone to them: Oh, they say, our man is not here. And when he returns we will send him along. I have got to close down my show.

Then the excise people. We have got to give them complimentary tickets because generally cinemas have got a bar—the excise inspector comes and says, well this is not right. Your peg here is bad, I must verify it. There are customers and he puts his nose in. I say: all right, take a pass. Let us carry on and do some business.

Then the D. C.'s office. He is the licensing authority over here and the papers have to be passed through one clerk and another till it reaches the Deputy Commissioner.

Q. Does the D. C. look into every film?

A. I mean the licence for the house—that is annual. Well, every clerk that has got to pass the papers must have a pass, otherwise he will detain the papers for a day or two, whatever it is in his power to do, and every exhibitor cannot go before the D. C. So for one function in the year you give him an annual pass. If we stop his pass, when the question of renewal comes, he takes his revenge.

Then there is the department of the electrical engineer to the Government of the Punjab. He is the licensing authority for the installation of the electrical fittings. His whole department is on our list for the whole year.

Then there is the question of the police. Well, I have not much to grumble about being the son of an honorary magistrate and municipal commissioner here.

Chairman: That is something at least.

A. My father knowing all the officials there is not much trouble. But generally there is trouble. Every constable who comes over there with a friend or relative has to have a pass. If we don't give them the pass—my theatre is situated next door to the police station and I know while I was away there was some trouble. My manager sends round and says there is a fight going on in the house, will you come and take charge of the situation? They say: Oh, we are not concerned; will you make a report to the . . . police station? and they will see about it. That means that the man goes two miles and by the time the police arrive on the scene the house will have been pulled down to the ground.

Well, some time back there was a meeting called by the Superintendent of police, Lahore, of all the exhibitors of cinemas and theatres. He had a letter from the Inspector General of Police—there was a complaint in the Legislative Assembly about the police extorting passes from the entertainment people. We were there, all of us. We had to line up round his table and his two deputy inspectors of police with whom we have to deal daily; they were there too. And he wanted to know if we had any complaints. Well, everybody said there were no complaints and I told him the same.

Q. You were afraid of eternal trouble.

A. And he told us if there is any trouble you can ring me up. I said: I cannot ring you up every now and again. After half a dozen times you will be fed up with me if I stop their passes. Now, by giving these passes, whatever happens, if there is trouble in the house, two people are fighting, the constable comes and turns them out.

Mr. Neogy: So pass means peace.

Chairman: Now, how can anybody remedy this?

A. No, there is no remedy for this.

Mr. Green: May I suggest one? It is already operative in Bombay where there is an entertainment tax. The payer of an entertainment tax has to show every complimentary ticket issued and the number of complimentary tickets issued is confined to a certain percentage. So that possibly the payment of the entertainment tax would resolve all your difficulties in that respect.

A. In that case we would have to pay the entertainment tax from our pocket.

Q. I think if you picked up your moral pecker . . .

A. It is not a question of my moral pecker. It is a question of running the show or closing it.

Q. I don't mean you personally. I mean the cinemas generally.

A. There is another rule in my cinema which I have introduced myself in Lahore and other people have taken it, that every complimentary ticket holder has got to pay one pice for every four annas and so on for charity. And we give that charity to some deserving institution. But the people I have mentioned now grumble and object to this.

Chairman: Do you keep a list of these complimentary passes?

A. It is no good.

Q. You do issue printed passes?

A. Not generally, Sir. We have got some printed passes too and we give it to people whom we wish to.

Q. But these people who you say form 25 per cent. of the audience. What record do you keep of these passes you issue to them?

A. We don't keep a record of these things. We have got a general record that so many passes have been issued in such and such classes.

Q. Well, of course, you are afraid of reporting it yourself.

A. That is one of the difficulties that I mentioned and we cannot do anything, especially in the Punjab. Bombay is quite a different place. The people over there are much more peaceful than the people in the Punjab. I saw one policeman taking about 20 culprits through the streets of Bombay. In the Punjab there is one thief and at least two or three policemen lead him in chains.

Oral Evidence of Mr. G. C. RAMPAL, Journalist on the staff of "The Civil and Military Gazette", on Saturday, the 26th November 1927.

Chairman: Now you want to speak about the advertisements of cinemas?

A. Day before yesterday when I spoke to your Secretary I wanted to confine myself to these advertisements but I have been watching the proceedings here since then and would like to make some remarks on other subjects as well.

Q. You have written critical notes on these subjects yourself?

A. I have done so in most of the local papers and some outside papers too, in the form of regular articles on such subjects as the Reform of Cinemas, etc. I will give you a cutting of one which appeared only last week on the Indian stage.

Q. We should like something that appeared before the appointment of this Committee.

A. I shall have to consult some files and find out. At any rate I will give you something I have written before the appointment of the Committee. I may say that I did not write knowing that this Committee was being appointed.

Q. Yes, because we should like to know what sort of comments were being made before the Committee was appointed. After our questionnaire their eyes were opened. Now, what is it you want to say about advertisements? Do you mean advertisements in the newspapers or posters?

A. Posters and handbills. I have been helping the local people while I was in charge of a local vernacular paper. I helped Madan's Theatres, Ltd., and the Universal Company in this way and I noticed that they would have no scruples in showing the worst scenes, especially kissing scenes, in their posters. In the very language they used in these posters they would encourage such feelings. If the public taste has been spoilt it is the fault of the cinema people. I do not think it is the fault of the public or even of the film itself but of the people running it.

Q. You think more harm is done by posters and advertisements than by the films themselves.

A. Yes, more harm is done by the posters. Some time ago, about 2 years back, there was a film called "The Covered Wagon". There was a huge advertisement about that film which led people to believe that there was some mystery inside the covered wagon to be exhibited. But there was really nothing at all.

Q. But was there anything in the poster itself or was it what the people thought?

A. No, the poster said "Come and see this mystery" and that went home to the people who thought there was going to be something strange inside that covered wagon.

Q. But what is the objection to that?

A. Such a poster does not give a true idea of the film and people expect all sorts of things.

Q. It may be exaggeration with the idea of catching people's attention, but all trade people do that, unless you can tell us that there was anything wrong in the poster or the picture.

A. There are a number of such posters that have come to my notice; but as I do not belong to the Police Department I do not keep any records. I have felt them to be highly objectionable and that not only from the commercial point of view. To speak plainly, it is cheating the public.

Q. But you can say that of every medicine advertisement.

A. You will excuse me if I say frankly that most of the medicines advertised, and especially Indian medicines, are frauds, but Government takes steps to guard people against them.

Q. That is what I say. They guarantee so many things which the medicines cannot do. However, what is your objection to such posters? Can you tell us what is wrong? Have you seen any posters or advertisements which contained any lettering which could be considered objectionable?

A. I have seen many. I will try and find them and send them to you wherever your Committee may be. I did not expect to appear as a witness here; otherwise I would have kept it all ready. Further I would like to say that I do not think that the films themselves have a pernicious effect upon the people.

Q. The films you don't object to?

A. No, because the films always aim at showing that a good man wins in this world.

Q. Virtue triumphs over vice?

A. Certainly. The first film I saw was in 1922. My father was conservative and would not allow me to go to the cinema; but when I joined the staff of a paper I went for the sake of reviewing the piece. And I felt then that there was much education to be derived from these films. Then another thing I want to say is that either students should not be allowed to go to the cinemas or the sale of liquor at these cinemas should be stopped. I do not

wish to enter upon a racial argument. These bars are kept generally for Europeans. Now Europeans generally go to the upper storeys and I think the liquor bar, if considered necessary, ought to be kept in the upper storey.

Q. Do students take to drink?

A. Well, they have got a strong temptation to do so when at these cinema shows they see others drinking, and they see their friends offering drinks. I think you have seen the way in which liquor is sold at these places, especially at the Madan Theatres. There is no separate room. On the right hand side of the main entrance is the bar counter in front of the booking office. I have been writing in my paper several times about this matter. Either the student community should remain out of these cinemas or they should have some moral strength in getting these liquor shops closed.

Q. You don't want a bar to be attached to cinemas?

A. No, I don't. The ordinary labouring class always prefer to go to the 4-anna seats and they are not affected; it is only the student class who are affected. The Madan Theatres on Macleod Road have not got much patronage from the illiterate classes. Not more than 10 per cent. of the audience belong to these classes. 75 per cent. of their income comes from the student community, and if their welfare and good is not taken into consideration some kind of legislation should be adopted. Then if you like I might also mention that at one time I saw a film in the Medical College showing some scenes of midwifery.

Q. To the college students?

A. Yes, it was a very good film from an educational point of view, though it might be obscene to an outsider or for a lad of 14 or 15. Of course for a medical student it is all right.

Q. So you attach importance to the film as an educative factor?

A. Yes. There is one more point I wanted to mention. Not only should Indian historical dramas be prepared, but we can have Indian serials also according to our taste, our life and surroundings.

Q. Well, people like you should take to preparing such films.

A. There is one point which has arisen in evidence, that the profession of acting is not liked in this country, because it is in bad hands, e.g., *mirasis*. Madan's Theatres started encouraging educated employment in this line but it has been discouraged both for actors as well as the Company because the Company is run on quite different lines from those expected of a good and standard one such as they have in America or England.

Q. It is run on commercial lines?

A. Yes. * * *

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Oral Evidence of Mr. D. P. MUKHERJEA, Lecturer in Economics and Sociology, Lucknow University, on Wednesday, the 7th December 1927, recorded in camera. (For his full evidence see Vol. II.)

* * * * *

Q. You say they are so much afraid of the bogey of public opinion, which is the more reason why you should influence them.

A. But we have absolutely no voice in the press because the press won't publish any articles criticising the films.

Q. Why not?

A. That is my own experience. I say this *in camera*, that these newspapers are entirely in the clutches of Madan's and other owners and advertisements fall off at once. I have some connection with the newspapers. I have been reviewing books and all that sort of thing.

Q. Have you ever written critical notes on the films?

A. Yes, I wrote two or three of them, but they would not publish them.

Q. Who are the papers?

A. I hope I am talking to you *in cinema*. Well, in *Forward*. That is the paper to which I contribute generally. They would not publish my article. One of the assistant editors told me frankly that such things could not be put in. Of course I wrote appreciative articles and I wanted to find out facts; but he said, "We cannot publish these things because they will drop off their advertisers" and you know the *Forward* lives more or less on its advertisements.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: And they wouldn't get free passes and tickets.

A. I have noticed the same thing here too.

Q. Therefore the so-called independent press is not independent.

A. It is not independent anywhere.

Q. Still they criticise public people.

A. They will criticise you too.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: I am accustomed to it.

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Evidence (taken in camera) of Mr. J. J. MADAN, Managing Director, Madan Theatres, Limited, on Tuesday, the 20th December 1927.

Chairman: There is one thing I should like to know. I suppose you are prepared to give us one or two specimens of your contract with those with whom you are associated?—the theatres with whom you are associated?

A. Certainly, Sir. We have one with a theatre in Lucknow, the Prince of Wales Theatre, with Mr. Liebenhals. The contract has expired, but these are the terms on which we work. We either charge them a fixed hire from Rs. 150 to Rs. 500 a film, for a week's programme, one showing. Or if they take a super like "The Thief of Bagdad" naturally we ask for more. Then we take a percentage also. 40 per cent. generally of the gross.

Q. On foreign pictures or Indian pictures?

A. Foreign pictures. And on giant supers 50 per cent. But if you would like to see a copy of the contract that has just expired, I can let you have it.

Q. The other point is whether they are prevented from taking from others?

A. Certainly not. Here is a concrete example. The lease which Mr. Liebenhals asked us to make. That has expired and we still supply him with pictures.

Q. Very well, that is one thing we wanted to know. However, you might give us one or two contracts about three or four months ago.

A. I can place this contract before you which has just expired. The contract with the Prince of Wales Theatre, Lucknow.

Q. The other thing is the Rangoon business. I want to understand it in more detail. I didn't trouble you yesterday about it. It seems you showed Mr. Laharry the correspondence where you offered Rs. 3,750 or Rs. 4,000 where he was paying only Rs. 1,500, before the tender came.

A. That was 15 years ago.

Q. No, no. Recently.

A. When he took the first lease it was 15 years ago.

Q. What I say is this. He has now had a lease for which he pays about Rs. 1,500. Even before the tender was called for, it seems you offered Rs. 3,750.

A. No, Sir. Not before the tender was asked for.

Q. And the owner wants Rs. 5,000 from him now.

A. I don't see how he can. If a tender was called and our tender was accepted, I think it is in the usual course of business.

Q. I know. That is a matter perhaps that shows it is an unfair competition, if you go and offer three times more.

A. No, Sir. In our opinion we considered that we were going to make so much money out of it and we believed we could afford to pay so much. And then again this Rs. 1,500 rental was ten years ago, when prices were not the same. On some of our present leases, we are paying that now.

Q. Can you tell us what the other people tendered?

A. We couldn't tell you that. As regards this point we would like to make it clear that the price we quoted is what we are paying in rental in other theatres to-day.

Mr. Green: In Rangoon?

A. Not in Rangoon. We are just talking about other centres. And this price was 10 years ago.

Chairman: Are you willing to produce the correspondence on the subject with your man there?

A. With our man there? Yes, Sir. We will do that. Surely we will.

Mr. Green: You said you would tell me *in camera* approximately what you would quote Government per foot for films made for them. Propaganda films.

A. I think I mentioned it, Sir.

Q. You said you wanted 10 per cent. on the actual expenses. But have you ever done any work for them? I am not in any way suggesting that you are charging too much. We are trying to get at some facts about the cost of producing Government films.

A. There is a picture we produced for the Tropical School of Medicine.

Q. Could you let me know what you charged?

A. In this particular case—there was just that one piece of work that was entrusted to us. But we really want to come to some mutual arrangement.

Q. Well, I took that up in full yesterday.

A. We charged them for the whole work Rs. 2,000 for 2,000 feet. Negative as well as positive.

Colonel Crawford: You only paid dividends here this year.

A. Yes, 2½ per cent.

Q. Since when?

A. We floated our company in 1919. There was one dividend of 10 per cent. After that there was no dividend for four years.

Q. So you cannot say that the trade is exactly in a flourishing position, since you cannot pay dividends for four years. What was the reason for that? A general slump in the entertainment trade?

A. That, as well as the entertainment tax and the heavy customs tariff.

Q. That and the economic depression all came together. Now, you own a very big circuit in India.

A. Yes.

Q. In fact, the most important circuit. It covers the real money-making part of the country. Would you object to our saying that you must not sell your circuit to a foreign country? Would you object to our saying that you should not be permitted to transfer that circuit to interests outside India?

A. All I say, Sir, is that I want an assurance that no foreign concern will be allowed to come here and either engage in production or open theatres here.

Q. You don't want foreigners producing or opening theatres here?

A. I consider that the industry should be Indian.

Chairman: You mean no non-Indian firm.

Colonel Crawford: And for that you would be prepared to accept the fact that you must not sell your interests outside the country.

A. Yes.

Chairman: If in the public interest we recommend that such a provision should be made, you would not object?

A. In fact, I suggested that. We advocate it.

Q. Now we have heard complaints that the Bombay producers cannot get their films taken here at a fair rental. You have just said that your arrangement with Mr. Liebenhals as regards your own production are 60 per cent. to them and 40 per cent. to you. As a producer you only want 40 per cent. Are you offering that to the Bombay producer?

A. Yes.

Q. As an exhibitor you are offering that in your theatres to the Bombay producers? 60 and 40 per cent. respectively?

A. Yes, 40 per cent. to them.

Q. What about the film "Sacrifice"?

A. I am glad you mentioned it. They wanted 45 per cent. from me when I had been to Bombay. When I saw the picture I thought the percentage of 45 was too much. I made a counter-proposition to them, but they would not lower that figure of 45 per cent. I said I could not take it at that rate, because my expenses are heavier than the others.

Q. Do you know how much money it fetched in Bombay during the first three weeks' show?

A. I have no idea. It may have fetched a good sum. But there are many other pictures that have fetched even more. My point is this. They demand from us an exorbitant percentage—that is the complaint they make against us and still they do it themselves.

Q. I only want to find out exactly what the position is. If you have a big picture don't you make it 50-50?

A. Yes.

Q. You say you must be the judge of that yourself?

A. Yes.

Q. Will you be inclined to give a little encouragement to Indian producers generally?

A. We give them every encouragement. I have shown you the list and I could not prove it in any better way than that.

Sir Haroon Jaffer: You supplied us with a balance sheet. You have 7 lakhs of shares?

A. Yes.

Q. Out of these 7 lakhs of shareholders how many are Indian?

A. About 80 per cent. are Indians.

Q. I find your net income was Rs. 10 lakhs last year.

A. That is after deducting all the expenses.

Q. I want to know your expenses. It is not mentioned in the balance sheet.

A. Our records are open for your inspection.

Q. You may give us an approximate figure.

A. I am quite willing to show you the actual records.

Q. When the net receipt is Rs. 10 lakhs, the gross may be Rs. 15 lakhs?

A. I would rather not make a guess of it.

Q. Your net income is Rs. 10 lakhs. That means nearly one-third of the total amount of the paid-up shares.

A. But you should not forget that we have reduced our capital. You should not argue on the Rs. 35 lakhs. You must base your argument on the Rs. 70 lakhs.

Q. However, the net income is nearly Rs. 10 lakhs, nearly one-third.

A. What about the depreciation?

Q. Out of that you have paid Rs. 1,75,000 to the shareholders?

A. Yes.

Q. And as managing directors you put down Rs. 1,10,000 to yourself?

A. Yes. When we did not declare any dividend we did not take any commission at all.

Mr. Neogy: At what rate do you calculate your depreciation?

Sir Haroon Jaffer: The depreciation is Rs. 3,80,000. Some witnesses here in Calcutta told us that most of the shares are with you and not in the market.

A. How many would you like to purchase from the market?

Q. Do you think that out of 70 lakhs of shares only 50,000 are available in the market?

A. Much more than that. What I can say is this that a great many more shares are available in the market.

Q. I want to know the proportion.

A. It is much more than Rs. 50,000.

Q. Was it a private concern before it became a limited company?

A. Yes. My father was the sole proprietor.

Q. What was the reason for making it a limited company?

A. To expand.

Q. I should like to ask you, if you are agreeable generally to help the Indian industry?

A. Yes, in every respect.

Written Statement of Mr. P. R. TIPNIS, Proprietor, New Royal Cinema, and Secretary, The Great Eastern Corporation, Ltd., Delhi.

INTRODUCTORY.

1. Yes, I have been in the cinema line for the last 17 years. I was manager of the Coronation Cinema in Bombay. Then I was associated from the very beginning with the establishing of the office of the Universal Film Manufacturing Company (now known as the Universal Pictures Corporation) in Bombay. I was also managing the concern of Messrs K. D. and Brothers who were the largest importers of British and American Cinema films and machinery. I was also managing the Imperial Cinema of Bombay. In the year 1919 I came to Delhi and started my own cinema business. I was running the Rink Theatre in Civil Lines as long as the Imperial Secretariat and the officials were situated in that locality. Now I have the New Royal Cinema and am also the Secretary of the Great Eastern Corporation Limited who, as is well known, are the producers of the film "The Light of Asia".

GENERAL.

2. (a) The major portion of the cinema audience is the illiterate classes. The attendance can not be said to be on the increase, but the reason is the general trade depression and unemployment and not the lack of interest. I am, of course, referring to the city cinemas here. My experience of the Bombay Cinemas is that it is the educated and the literate classes that mainly constitute the cinema audience.

(b) The regular Cinemagoers are 80 per cent. Mohamedans and 20 per cent. Hindus.

(c) 5 per cent.

PART I.

Film Industry in India.

3. Thrilling, fighting and magical subjects these are mostly American and the Mythological subjects, while the former are popular with all classes the latter are patronized by the Hindus.

4. Yes, the exhibitors are trying their best in this direction as it is to their interests. They know their audience and they give to the audience what they want. I must say that the vast majority of the cinema audience consider cinema-going a pastime and diversion and do not care for nor are they affected by the social American or European pictures.

5. Yes, they are. As the demand is on the increase, the supply is commensurate with it.

(a) As is always the case everywhere in the beginning, there is much to be desired in point of good quality. But the quality is improving steadily.

(b) Yes, where education has increased. For example in the Bombay and particularly in the Madras Presidencies, there is a very great demand for Indian pictures. In Bengal also they like Bengali films. In the Punjab and U. P., only well known mythological subjects and the films depicting stories from the folklore are appreciated.

(c) Ordinarily Indian films are more profitable to be shown had the rates been on the same level as American films. Even though the Indian films are saved the Import Duty, the rates are high as the production cost considering the limited field for exploitation is much.

Among the successful Indian films may be cited "The Light of Asia", "Krishna Janam", "Murlivala", "Lankadahan", "Shirin Farhad", "Allauddin and the Wonderful Lamp".

The "Light of Asia" film is to be distinguished from the other Indian films. Though the theme is Indian, the scenario was written by an Indian, the cast and the material is all Indian, the direction, photography and the technique is foreign—German and is thus in a class by itself.

6. (a) Yes, they are bound to be more popular of course if they depict the details as shown in the original. The difficulty is not the want of themes or suitable subjects, but the want of material, the extraneous aids such as the suitable scenery and locations. No facilities are open to the producing companies to take certain scenes at places where they actually happened or at places bearing semblance to the actual scenes of action. If adequate travelling concessions are allowed and when no annoyance or inconvenience to the present occupants is involved, free use of the scenes and material is allowed by the Government, I think, India can produce films which will have an International or at least Imperial market as the "Light of Asia" has succeeded.

(b) It is difficult to point to a particular kind even the masses who have not had the necessary education to know the original stories from the literature and history are likely to appreciate and understand the film version if it is made life like and true to details. Mythology especially the well known part of it would find general favour with the illiterate as also the incidents from History the knowledge of which is handed down from generation to generation.

7. I do not think that any difficulty is experienced in supplying suitable pictures for the British troops. In the pre-war days the soldiers did not come from educated classes and appreciated only Western Cowboy dramas and knockout comedies, but now since the recruitment is from literate and educated classes, they also appreciate social and historical English or American pictures. As regards the Indian troops, their needs in this respect are the

same as their illiterate brethren outside the army. They would prefer pictures from Mythology and from folklore.

8. (a) Though I am not satisfied, I am quite hopeful.

(b) The main difficulties are the lack of necessary facilities of travelling, the lack of permission to take scenes at suitable places. The production of films is also handicapped by the lack of adequate technical knowledge of Direction, photography and scenario-writing. The Government may well select a few young men and send them to Europe and America for such training. The development of this industry is very important from the educational point of view and Government may have two or three State Scholarships for such training.

I do not think the distribution and exhibition require any special consideration.

9. Good films are not invariably available. The exhibitor has to take the bad ones also. The question of the monopoly arises only when the exhibitors control certain pictures and it is true that certain pictures are almost always shown at their theatres only.

10. There is the annual contract system adopted by the American, French and Indian Companies. Some of the suppliers do try to have a penalty clause inserted in the contract for showing other films than their own. This penalty clause of course much handicaps the showman as he has often to show the trash of the suppliers in preference to others' good films. The producer has also justification for having such a clause as he has to recover the cost of the particular pictures considered "bad" by the showman or the public.

There are not properly speaking "first run" or "Key theatres" in India. Sometimes Messrs. Madan Theatres Limited keep one film at an important theatre in Bombay or Calcutta for weeks to attract and centre public attention on the particular film. Beyond such a publicity stunt, this system does not obtain in India.

Blind booking involves booking of "bad, unsuitable" films. This while compensating the producer for the cost makes the showman and the public suffer.

11. None whatever. This is invariably refused unless the particular showman is a personal friend of the controlling agent.

Yes, there should be the system of trade shows at the central offices enabling the Magazine Editors to review the films for the enlightenment of the general public and showman.

12. The Amusement-tax has seriously handicapped the showman where it is in force, especially the higher classes of admission are not sufficiently filled as the audience want to avoid paying the tax. This tax should be taken off.

13. The duty is excessive, being almost equivalent to the cost of the print. While I am not in favour of its total abolition, I want that the tariff on all materials required for the indigenous production of films be abolished or appreciably reduced.

14. Yes, in-as-much the production of such films at the Government expense brings in some immediate return to the producers, they can utilize this money for their other production activities. Such a use of the cinema is in the best interests of the State and the public in general. Generally for such films there is no public demand though its necessity for propagation of knowledge can not be denied.

15. Yes, decidedly. There is Light, rich natural and architectural scenery, easily available labour, suitable climate, etc.

16. As stated by me against question 8 (b) there is much to be desired in the matter of technical knowledge, e.g., Direction, photography, etc.

The Government must provide for training in foreign countries and if the British producers really desire the co-operation of India, they would not refuse to allow Indian youths to have the necessary training in their studios, etc.

17. As the possibilities of this line are made known to the capitalists, I think there should be no difficulty in obtaining the necessary capital. If the Government help the industry, the capitalists will feel encouraged the more.

18. While there is the necessity for watching the general interests of the employees as in the case of mills, factories, no legislation will be found necessary. By administrative action, many facilities including those of the travelling, the use of the museum and the antiquities may be made available.

19. The cost of production is cheaper as the labour is cheap. But the material is costly owing to the duties thereon. As the quality and the technique improve, the cost will rise. At present there is no comparison between the foreign and the indigenous production. The duty on the material imported must be reduced.

20. (a) Even if the Government has to provide funds, the expenditure would be well justified. The cinema is a powerful instrument for good or evil and if in directing the production activities on the right lines, the Government has to finance, I think, the public will not object.

(b) According as each department of the State such as agriculture, education, sanitation, military requires the services of the cinemas, it must be prepared to pay the piper from the funds allocated to it.

21. I am not in favour of such an ambitious scheme. Besides to establish such an agency free from communal or political bias is next to impossible in the present state of things.

Films of the British Commonwealth.

22. This is a very important aspect of the film production. As an integral part of the Empire, India must participate willingly in the matters of Imperial usefulness. But India must not be used as a handmaiden or to further the interests of the Empire at the cost of her own. British films as at present produced have no market value in India. The improvement must be made from within and the British film industry cannot be bolstered up on the support of the Empire Film Scheme.

In the initial stages of the Industry, India would surely require the foreign support and guidance and if Britain could give the necessary help and guidance, I do not think India has reason to reject the offer. There must not, however, be the appearance or suspicion that India is being used as a tool by England to further its own ends. Indian opinion is now-a-days suspicious in whatever is done in the name of the Empire and must be reassured of Indian interests alone being the main consideration.

(a) I think it would, because of the technical knowledge and assistance such a co-operation will involve.

(b) I am doubtful of this. In spite of the best efforts made our film "The Light of Asia" could not get a proper footing in the British Empire.

(c) I do not think.

Beyond stating that there are vast possibilities and resources for such co-operative and co-ordinative effort, I have no suggestions to make. When there is conjoint action, the men concerned will readily find the ways and means. The limitations I have already implied in my main answer, India must be treated as an independent unit and her willing co-operation must be invited.

23. This is a small matter. Such informations can be given by means of Topical Gazettes. This the Imperial Conference should manage.

PART II.

Social Aspects and Control.

24. (a) No, I do not think so.

(b) No, nowhere vice is depicted to triumph and always virtue is rewarded ultimately. If any film is defective in this respect, the present Censor can mend matters.

(c) The present restrictions on obscenity, etc., do not let out any harmful films.

(d) Quite adequate. In fact, films suffer more than books and newspapers. I know that the films are seen by the illiterate masses, the books and papers are read by the literate. However, literacy alone is not education and if you cannot prevent any literate man from reading such books and papers. I do not see why the illiterate be penalised or prevented from seeing such films.

(e), (f) No.

25. Not in the least. I am not in favour of any special restrictions being imposed on the films other than those on books and newspapers.

26. (a) No. On the other hand religious susceptibilities are now-a-days too much made of. For example, the Muhammadans do not suffer any picture made depicting the life of their Prophet. This may or may not be reasonable, but that they should resent films like "The Moon of Israel", it is most objectionable—when there is no direct attack on their religion or any deliberate perversion of their beliefs, they cannot prevent other communities from seeing such films. As the Censors have certified the film "The Life of Christ" for Christians only, I think the films like the "Moon of Israel," etc., should be certified as for "all except Muhammadan". Otherwise the fanaticism of a particular community will interfere with the rights of other communities. Take the instance of the film "The Light of Asia" depicting the life of Lord Buddha, the general tenor of the film version is true to the teachings of Lord Buddha and other communities on seeing the picture will be favourably impressed by the life of the Buddhist's prophet. But the fanaticism of the Muhammadans also caught a small section of the Buddhists in Ceylon and the Malay States and the Government instead of being strong yielded to the agitation and banned its exhibition. Now the question arose there also that to satisfy the whims of a small section, the whole community was not allowed to see the film. Not only that, but the other communities simply because they were in Ceylon could not see the film which has been admired everywhere it was shown. That is why I say that if the whole community is willing to leave its conscience in the keeping of its fanatic section, let it, but it should not be allowed to interfere with the rights of other community in seeing the film. Let such films be certified as meant for others than the particular community.

I think the films should not be deprived of their liberty any more than the books. If at any particular place, the administration apprehends any danger to the public peace, let that administration take the responsibility for the stoppage of a certain film in that area. But the Censor must be left unfettered by such considerations.

27. (a) The Europeans are not justified in the fears they generally express that Indians do not get a true idea of their social life from the Western films. Human nature is everywhere the same and if the films show that the Europeans or Americans also suffer from moral or social evils, I think no harm is done. In the days of newspaper publicity, nothing escapes public notice. If stricter Censorship of the film is found necessary, the Government will also have to do the same with regard to the World's newspapers and books. I thus do not think that the films have a demoralising or otherwise injurious effect on the public.

I think if any film misrepresents the Western civilization, the remedy is there in the country of origin. If a European or an American can see the particular film in Europe or America without his feelings being outraged, I do not see why the film should not be shown in India. The films do not expose the Westerners more than books and newspapers.

I do not think that the Western life is not properly understood by the uneducated Indian nor have any undesirable results followed. No civilization can ever be sacrosanct or free from faults and if you insist on only its good points being displayed, you set yourself an impossible task. True civilization weathers and survives bigger storms and shocks and is not worth

preserving if it is so fragile and cannot put up with what any book or film points out.

(b) Yes, Indian civilization at times is misrepresented in the films produced abroad. Our Indian Censors can certainly object to such films, but perhaps they take no notice of the misrepresentation as their civilization has outlined far more terrible attacks from foreigners and these distortions in the films do not ruffle its surface. I do not know of films misrepresenting Indian civilization which are shown abroad but not in India.

28. I do not think. I, however, realise that children and adolescents do not now receive adequate moral and religious teaching in schools and are thus susceptible to outside influences. But the remedy does not lie in closing the cinema doors to them but in giving them a grounding in the religious and moral principles at schools.

29. I have no objection but the censors must not abuse this certification. Ordinary kissing and dancing scenes need not be tabooed.

30. No.

31. Yes.

32. Yes, but there are no representatives of the industry on the Board.

33. (a), (b), (c) Yes.

34. (a) No. In having a Central Board there is the danger of certain films being uncertified for all provinces which in the complex state of things is sure to result. When decentralization is the order of the day centralization should not be tried in this matter. Moreover the establishment of a Central Board will not necessarily mean immunity from provincial or local censorship when once the film has been passed by the Board.

(1) Does not arise.

(2) Yes, the censorship would be a costly affair.

(3) Does not arise.

(4) If at all decided on, it should be established at Delhi.

(b) No useful purposes will be served.

(c), (d) Does not arise.

35. (a) The industry must be represented.

(b) No objection if the Advisory Board is manned sufficiently by representatives of the Industry.

36. (a) Yes. These men must be men of education and knowledge of the Industry.

(b) I do not think all films need be examined by the members of the Board. Yes, such men would be available.

37. (a) Yes, elaborate censorship by the local authorities is not necessary though they have the right to uncertify any film they like.

(b) No further safeguards are needed.

38. Yes, "The Light of Asia" depicting the life of Lord Buddha though it passed the muster of the Buddhists in India was not passed by the Ceylon and Malay States authorities.

Similarly the Life of the Enlightened one, also depicting the life of Buddha was banned in Burma though it has been shown all over India.

The Swami Shradhanand Funeral Procession Topical though not objected to anywhere else was objected to in the Punjab and the Delhi Province.

39. No. But if such films are shown in India, I do not think India's right or the Indian Censor's independence should be interfered with or swayed by those considerations. Every nation must have its rights unchallenged.

40. No. No.

41. Yes. The moral tone of films as of books advances with the progress of Civilization.

42. By giving the trade the representation on the Board.

I have also one suggestion to make. If any film is not passed by the censors; there should be the refund of the duty paid even if the film has not been sent back out of the country.

43. No.

44. By the introduction of Trade shows.

45. (a) No regular control is needed.

(b) Yes.

Oral Evidence of Mr. P. R. TIPNIS, Secretary, Great Eastern Corporation, Ltd., and Proprietor, New Royal Cinema, on Monday, the 20th February 1928 at Delhi.

Chairman: I understand you are the Secretary of the Great Eastern Corporation Limited?

A. Yes.

Q. When was it started?

A. It was started in 1924.

Q. It produced only one film?

A. Yes.

Q. That is the "Light of Asia"?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you know the business side of the picture?

A. I have been the Secretary for the last 1½ years and I am in possession of the papers. It was prepared and I had the honour to exploit it throughout the World.

Q. You say in your answer that the "Light of Asia" could not get a proper footing in the British Empire. Could you tell us exactly where out of India the film was exhibited?

A. It was received in all places except the British Isles and America. Elsewhere we had no difficulties in pushing it.

Q. In the British Isles you could not get exhibitors?

A. We tried it for 6 months there and they would not take the film in America also even after it was exhibited to Their Majesties in England at Windsor Palace. They do not receive the picture only because there is a certain prejudice. Otherwise all over the world even in China and Japan it was received well.

Q. In other countries of Europe?

A. Yes.

Q. The exhibitors in America and Britain would not take it and you have tried?

A. Yes.

Q. This information you are giving from the papers in your possession?

A. Yes.

Q. You did not yourself go to England?

A. No. The information I had is from our representative there.

Q. Have you the correspondence with you?

A. I have some letters to show you. They are with my assistant who is waiting outside. Shall I bring him here.

Q. Yes. I would like to have the reports of your London agent and New York agent.

A. Here are the letters.

Q. You don't mind our taking copies of them?

A. I have not taken permission of the Directors. If you don't give publicity to them I have no objection to your taking copies.

Q. It is only for our use. We will keep it confidential.

A. Very well, Sir.

Q. It (the Light of Asia) is being shown in Japan I suppose?

A. Yes.

Q. All these letters relate to the "Light of Asia"?

A. Yes.

Q. Have you anything else to throw light on this question?

A. I think those letters are sufficient.

Q. Do you know what was spent on the "Light of Asia"?

A. The cost of production was Rs. 1,71,423.

Q. Was it for the negative and the print?

A. Yes.

Q. How many prints do you take at a time?

A. We had eight prints for India. The other prints were obtained by the exhibitors direct.

Q. So the production cost to India is that figure?

A. Yes.

Q. How much has been realised up-to-date?

A. The figures are confidential.

Q. Your whole evidence will be treated as confidential.

A. Rs. 72,404, excluding Emelka's share of up to 30th September last.

Q. In India and foreign countries?

A. Yes.

Q. So you have not yet met the cost of production?

A. No.

Q. How many months did it take?

A. It took about 5 months.

Q. Who were the photographers?

A. Germans.

Q. The Directors?

A. Germans.

Q. The Actors?

A. They are all Indians, high class.

Q. You are able to get good ladies for it?

A. Yes.

Q. What about the printing and developing?

A. That was done in Germany.

Q. The photography was done in India and the scenery here?

A. Yes. The prints were taken in Germany and we imported the prints.

Q. How many partners were there?

A. It was a private limited concern.

Q. Is the company now working?

A. Yes.

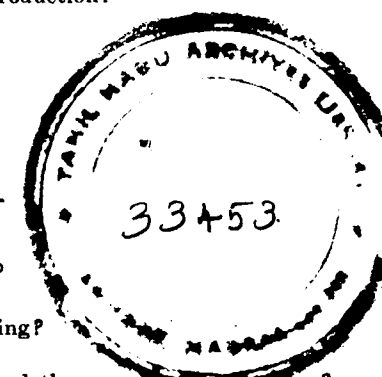
Q. And you are still receiving money from foreign countries?

A. Yes.

Q. The receipts, up to what month is that?

A. Up to the 30th September 1927.

Q. When was the film released?



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- A. On the 26th April 1926 in Bombay.
- Q. That was the first show and you say this film was exhibited actually to Their Majesties at Windsor Castle?
- A. Yes.
- Q. When was it shown to Their Majesties?
- A. It was exhibited on the 27th April 1926.
- Q. Could you tell us how much you spent for exhibiting the film?
- A. We had to hire the theatre and the receipts were too low. It did not even pay for the hire. There were three parties in the concern. Emelka managing it, Rai and Indian players featuring the film and the Great Eastern Corporation financing it. On the whole it was not a successful venture so far.
- Q. You have not got the actual figures, of receipts and expenditure?
- A. The figures received are those sent to us by Emelka and during the period under consideration we were losing.
- Q. So they are down by the exhibition in England?
- A. Yes, to the extent of £2,000. Discussion among us is going on still on this subject.
- Q. You have got experience in this line for how many years?
- A. For 17 years I have experience.
- Q. Have you seen Indian pictures?
- A. I was the first man to produce an Indian picture in 1911 (Pundlik). It was shown in that year. This was the first picture produced in India.
- Q. You think that Indian films based on mythological stories would have no market outside India so as to be a financial success?
- A. No.
- Q. Do you understand what is meant in this letter by "something simple and popular enough to meet the demand of the provincial and not well educated but intelligent American audience"?
- A. I don't think we understand what they really want. But if you produce a picture from their point of view they will push it.
- Q. So the same is the case with the British. Unless you work conjointly and they get the pecuniary interest in the transaction you do not think the film will have a market?
- A. No.
- Q. Do you know any other Indian picture that was tried outside India, in Europe or America?
- A. The pictures of Phalke and those produced by the Kolhapur people were tried and they were not financially successful.
- Q. In respect of the "Taj" film what is the business arrangement?
- A. I do not know anything about it but you will get information from Mr. Rai. There are the British Instructional films and Ufas representatives, the British and German directors and Camera men. They are trying to bring out the new film.
- Q. You are keen upon getting facilities for the Indian producers, facilities of access to places and also reduced rates for travelling?
- A. Yes, they do not now give the concession to film producing and film hiring companies as they give to cinema shows and to theatrical ones.
- Q. Do you experience any difficulties in getting access to places of interest?
- A. Fortunately, we had the necessary assistance from Government. We generally get all the assistance we want. But that is not the case with smaller concerns. They very often fail. But generally in State gardens we find it difficult to get access unless we have the necessary backing.
- Q. Of course the private parties would not allow that?

- A. But we are not robbing them. It is a matter for private agreement and we are not concerned with it.
- Q. You complained about import duty. Without such duty how do you expect the Indian industry to thrive?
- A. We have to pay about 35 per cent. It is on the print.
- Mr. Green: We are referring to the standard film? The duty is only 20 per cent. on a tariff valuation of 4½ annas per foot, which comes to Rs. 42-3 per 1,000 feet.
- A. I am referring to duty not only on positive and negative but also on manufactured films.
- Chairman: You want cheap films made cheaper. Already they are cheap?
- A. Yes, but we have to pay a double duty if we import.
- Q. As a producer are you not interested in this?
- A. I view it from the showman's point of view.
- Q. You have got cinemas also?
- A. Yes.
- Q. What about getting the films?
- A. We have contracts with American film companies. I have no difficulty in getting films.
- Q. I mean you are not in any inconvenienced by the so-called monopoly of Madan's?
- A. No.
- Q. You do not complain about it?
- A. No. It is only some big pictures they control. We have to resort to other pictures, but it does not affect our trade.
- Q. So the market is wide open to you Indian producers?
- A. Yes.
- Q. Do you import yourself or do you get your films through any agency?
- A. We get our supplies on an annual contract basis. We have to take some pictures at certain times.
- Q. Then it is blind-booking?
- A. Almost.
- Q. How do you say it is blind-booking. Don't you get information of your exhibits in advance?
- A. We have information only from their papers. We do not get any independent information of the pictures. I do not much believe in them.
- Mr. Green: You have no choice?
- A. We have none. I have said so in my replies.
- Q. How many concerns are there?
- A. There are the Universal, Pathé, Alliance of Calcutta and there are some independent imports also. All follow the same system.
- Q. Have you had to suffer as a showman?
- A. Fortunately my experience is different. I was the man who established the Universal in India and has had happy repulsions with others saving come into contact with them in some capacity or other.
- Q. That is to say you have not suffered much? You are able to get what you want.
- A. Yes.
- Q. Do you think the ordinary showman will suffer?
- A. They do suffer.
- Chairman: Is it a paying concern the exhibitors profession here? I want your experience in the matter?
- A. I think I had no failures.
- Q. How many years have you been doing this exhibition work?

A. For the last 10 years.

Q. Before that were you interested in the exhibition work?

A. I was managing one of the best cinemas in Bombay and I was connected with several other shows in the Punjab also.

Chairman : And in all the concerns you were interested in, were they all paying concerns?

A. Yes, they were.

Q. And what is the reason for the Great Eastern Corporation not doing any work now?

A. They are now thinking of reviving the work. There has been some internal trouble in the management and this was the reason why the Corporation has not been functioning all along.

Q. But now they are trying to revive the industry?

A. Yes.

Sir Haroon Jaffer : Do you think that Government should help in the encouragement of this industry?

A. It would certainly be good if Government could do anything in the matter.

Q. In what way do you want the Government to help the industry in this country?

A. By affording facilities for travel, use of buildings, museums, etc., for exhibition purposes and other things.

Q. Do the Government refuse to help you now?

A. I think that Government is not affording the industry all the help it can.

Q. Is that your own experience?

A. That is not exactly my experience, but other people have complained to me about it.

Q. Do you think Government should subsidise or grant loans to film producing companies?

A. I will put it this way. There should be a central producing office half the capital of which may be subscribed by the showmen directly and Government can also advance loans which could be recovered out of the income accrued from showing pictures.

Q. Have you seen the travelling cinema next to the Royal Cinema in the exhibition ground, Delhi?

A. No, I have not seen it.

Q. Have you seen the films which the travelling cinemas show?

A. No.

Q. It is said that the films shown by these travelling cinemas are generally torn and bad films?

A. There may be one or two bad films like that, it all depends on who conducts the shows.

Q. Have you tried the Baby cinematographs?

A. I don't think they will serve business purposes. The picture show will be very small. If it is shown to the public they won't have the patience to see them.

Q. Can you not use them for educational purposes?

A. Do you mean in schools?

Q. Why, to the public in general also to propagate films which have an educative value?

A. As I have already said it won't be useful for propaganda purposes, Baby cinemas are only useful for home—a luxury in a rich man's house.

Mr. Neogy : The Great Eastern Corporation is a registered company, I suppose?

A. It is a private limited company.

Q. May I know what the capital of that concern is?

A. Rs. 1,00,000 fully subscribed.

Q. Are all the shareholders of the concern Indians?

A. Yes, they are all Indians and very respectable people too.

Q. Have you got any foreign capital in that concern?

A. No, not at all. We had only the expert assistance of Germans.

Q. You said there were German Directors, but were they not associated with Indian Directors too?

A. If they had done that, then the picture "Light of Asia" would have been far superior.

Q. They did not do it, you say?

A. The entire Direction was done by the Germans. For example, the film entitled "Shiraz" from an Indian point of view would not appeal to the audience. There are some ridiculous scenes therein. For example, in front of a Mohamadan house there was a sacred tree. I tried to explain the inconsistency between the two but they did not take me seriously. Moreover there are other incongruities also. In spite of all these defects, I think the film will go well.

Q. There is some incongruity in using buildings of the Moghul type of architecture for the production of the film "Life of Buddha". Did it strike anybody about it?

A. I don't think there was any press criticism about that.

Q. So, nobody took any exception to that?

A. Only critics will go into such details. The general cinema-going public don't go deep into these matters of detail unless they are very essential points.

Mr. Green : I want to clear my own mind about the reason for the failure of the "Light of Asia" in the English market. That letter from America deals with certain technical defects such as slowness of action, lack of continuity and bad photography. In your written statement also you criticise Indian films in almost the same strain. Then how is it you consider that American opinion was prejudiced?

A. There was a similar letter from Germany and they criticised the American.

Q. Your exploiting in Europe was done apparently by a German firm and the photography was done by a German, and naturally Germans, would speak highly of their own productions. Therefore, why should we not put greater faith in the American criticism of the "Light of Asia"?

A. As far as my personal experience goes, I think Germans are experts from the photographic point of view and I still consider that the photography in that picture was very good.

Q. I am trying to suggest to you that it is a prejudiced view of the Germans because it is a German film?

A. Why should it be so? Then it comes to this that an Indian film to be shown outside India, we must bring together American, British, German Directors and Cameramen, if that is not prejudice what is it?

Q. Another point which we were told by another witness was that English exhibitors had already booked for the whole of the year and therefore they could not take up "Light of Asia". What do you think about that?

A. That has always been the excuse.

Q. We have also been told by many people and legislation has also recently been passed in England to prevent that very thing. Does it not seem likely that it will pave the way for Indian films to go into the English market or do you think it likely that films of German origin would be more popular in England?

A. I don't think many popular films of Germany are popular in England.

Chairman : That is also prejudice, is it not?

Mr. Green : It might be so but I only wanted to point out that German judgment about their own productions would naturally be partial.

A. The British also are not modest in that respect.

Q. Do you know whether the Germans had a studio in India?

A. No, they hadn't one.

Q. Were all the pictures taken in natural light?

A. I think all the pictures were taken in natural light.

Q. Had they arc lights?

A. I think they had arc lights also but I don't know whether they used them at all. The whole equipment came from Germany.

Q. It has been very vaguely suggested in your written statement and more definitely in your reply to oral questions that the best method of getting finance is to get hold of the exhibitors. I understand this is a very common method now adopted?

A. Yes, they are the exclusive owners themselves.

Q. The lady actors who took part in the production of that picture "Light of Asia", were they all professionals?

A. No, they were all from the higher class.

Q. They did not consider it immodest to come and act for the picture?

A. No, so long as the male actors were also gentlemen. As a matter of fact, for the film "Shiraz" I succeeded in getting ladies of higher class from Bombay and other places.

Q. So you think there won't be any difficulty in getting high class lady actresses provided you get gentlemen actors also?

A. I don't think there will be any serious difficulty at all.

Q. I think more than one witness told us that dress of this nature worn by ladies in this film "Light of Asia" with arms absolutely bare is considered improper by Indian ladies of the higher class as they consider the dress of the European ladies improper for the same reason?

A. I don't think we had any difficulty at all in that respect.

Mr. Neogy : Some of the actresses in this film were Anglo-Indians I suppose? The leading part was taken up by an Anglo-Indian girl, is it not?

A. I think so but there were several Indian ladies who also took part in the film.

Q. And they had no objection to act for your film?

A. Not all, we managed to get cultured ladies and gentlemen to take the parts.

Memorandum containing the views of the Government of Burma on the terms of reference of the Indian Cinematograph Committee.

The Questionnaire of the Indian Cinematograph Committee was issued partly by this Department and partly through the Commissioner of Police, Rangoon, as President of the Board of Censors, in accordance with the wishes of the Committee expressed in their letters No. 18 of 10th October 1927, and No. 64 of 21st October 1927. The instructions at the head of the Questionnaire were that answers to the questions should be sent to the Secretary, Indian Cinematograph Committee. The views of the Local Government were not at that time asked for, and copies of the replies of the various people to whom the Questionnaire was distributed by this department and the Commissioner of Police, Rangoon, have not been supplied to the Local Government. The Cinematograph Committee in its letter No. 527 of the 17th December, which was received in Rangoon on the 21st December, said that the Committee would be grateful if the Government of Burma should be willing to express their views on the subject under enquiry or at least on the main questions involved, in the form of a memorandum, and (if thought desirable) through an official witness. The Local Government has been able to secure copies of only a few replies sent in answer to the Questionnaire by certain officials, and has therefore insufficient materials in the way of opinions of the trade, the outside public, and non-officials interested in the various questions involved, on which to express considered opinions at this stage, nor has it had sufficient time to study the answers of which it has copies, or to secure the further information which would be required before a series of connected and considered answers even on this evidence could be given. The Local Government therefore is inclined to defer any expression of its opinion until it has had before it the evidence which will be tendered to the Commission and seen the conclusions arrived at by the Committee.

2. On the following points only would the Local Government be inclined to express any opinion at this stage:—

Question 21. The Local Government is opposed to the suggestion that a State Agency should be created to undertake the management of the film industry as a monopoly.

Question 34. The Local Government is provisionally of opinion that a separate Provincial Board will always be necessary for Burma,

(a) because the production of Burmese films is likely to increase and only a local censorship is likely to be satisfactory; 48 Burmese films were brought before the Censors in 1926;

(b) similarly, Chinese films are now being imported direct and censorship is much more likely to be satisfactory by a Local Board than by a single Central Board. Censorship of Burmese and Chinese films in India would cause great inconvenience to the trade and would be expensive. A certain number of other films are also imported direct into Burma, and a Provincial Board will always be necessary to deal with these as well as with the locally-produced Burmese or imported Chinese films.

The Local Government would also draw attention to the fact that there is a large Chinese population in Burma, and that scenes in films which might offend Chinese sentiment in this Province might easily be overlooked by a Central Board.

Notes by Chairman on Cinemas and Studios visited by the Committee.

The 18th November 1927.

We have seen so far 4 Indian films in Bombay, and I enumerate them in order of merit as I estimate them.

1. Sacrifice.
2. Tainted Virtue.
3. At the Clang of Fetters.
4. The Nurse.

In "Sacrifice" in addition to the acting even the technique was good though not so good as the Western ones.

In "The Nurse" the acting especially of the chief actors was particularly good, but the theme of the story and traits of life depicted were not such as should be encouraged in Indian films.

"Tainted Virtue" was a fairly good show in most respects. "Sacrifice" is also likely to attract an outside India market.

In every one of these there is vast scope for improvement.

In "At the Clang of Fetters" there was too much of the fighting scenes and I understand the Indian audience want such scenes and it up to the industry to educate the public taste gradually by improving the tone.

T. RANGACHARI.

I consider "The Sacrifice" to be the best Indian film I have ever seen, and think that with good publicity it would show successfully in good English cinemas.

I agree that "The Nurse" was the worst film we have seen, as it was merely a crude copy of Western crudities.

A. M. GREEN.

I agree. I believe "Sacrifice" and "Tainted Virtue" with slight improvements and re-editing could be shown at home.

J. D. CRAWFORD.

We saw one more Indian film in Bombay—"Gun Sundari". I should be disposed to place it between "Sacrifice" and "Tainted Virtue", though it might be modified in one or two scenes so as to improve it.

K. C. NEOGY.

Lahore, the 27th November 1927.

By the courtesy of Dr. Patel of Messrs. Patel & Sons, Educational Pictures Corporation, the Committee had the benefit of viewing certain selected educational films at the Private studio belonging to Patel & Sons. These films were very instructive and showed remarkable excellence in conception and production. Messrs. Patel & Sons have got a good supply of choice films of an educational character and their services richly deserve to be availed of by educational authorities and local and mofussil Boards for spreading knowledge of a useful kind among the people. This effort on the part of Dr. Patel of improving films of this kind for educational purposes at considerable cost deserves a word of commendation. Looking at the character of films of this kind produced in America and Germany one gathers what wide scope there is for the spread of knowledge in various departments of life, industry and Nature by means of the film and what great effort has been bestowed by other countries on work of this character.

T. RANGACHARI.

I agree. I fancy more recent productions are even better than those we have had the pleasure of seeing.

J. D. CRAWFORD.

The 30th November 1927.

Since my last note on our visits to various cinemas I made a surprise visit to the *Sri Krishna Theatre* in Parel, North Bombay, where an Indian film "Sri Krishna Sudhama" was being exhibited. It was produced by a Nasik (I believe) Hindustan Company. It was fairly a good show. The photography and acting were not bad. The only defect was that several boys took the part of girls which in a way detracted from the effect of the picture. The audience was mainly composed of 3 or 4 anna ticket holders. The highest class available was only 9 annas. The collections could not have exceeded Rs. 50. The theatre was a decent one and I did not see any very marked signs of rough or unclean use of the place. Everything appeared to be well looked after. This picture was based on anecdotes connected with Sri Krishna's life and teachings.

The Committee had also a private view of "Gun Sundari", a production by the Kohinoor Film Co., which showed remarkable signs of improvement in technique among Indian productions.

The Committee also saw in Karachi another Indian film known as "Pleasure Mad". All these were social dramas depicting or caricaturing modern tendencies in India and fairly good attempts at elevating the moral tone of the people. There was a good attendance of the so-called illiterate classes at the Indian shows. One thing which struck me was that there were cries of ejaculation from the mass of illiterate people when the captions were screened. Many of them apparently follow the captions in the vernacular very well.

The Committee saw in Lahore a Persian love epic well known in Upper India produced by the Excelsior in Bombay. The shows were crowded with people most of the poorer classes. They showed keen appreciation though the photography and technique were very poor.

In Amritsar the Committee inspected both the cinemas now working there. One of them is said to be controlled by Madan's and the other by another Indian gentleman. The latter was showing "Alladin" an Indian picture, and the former was showing a picture named "The Birth of a Nation". The attendance at the "Alladin" shown as very much larger and the so-called illiterate people thoroughly enjoyed the show, following the captions in the vernacular with ease. The attendance at the Western picture (former) was poor and the audience showed very little signs of appreciation, the captions being in English and Dutch. This latter picture as a picture was incomparably the better one. There were fighting scenes, but that too did not rouse the audience.

T. RANGACHARI.

The 6th December 1927.

On the evening of the 6th December the Committee had a view of the film "Merry Widow" shown in the Prince of Wales Theatre.

The Theatre was a very good and comfortable one and well situated. It was a remarkable fact to notice that hardly a dozen people formed the audience. The film was certainly a fine one and the latter half was certainly an admirable show in many respects but in the first half of the show there were certain scenes—small bits here and there—which were certainly objectionable in the sense of too much passionate love-making and riotous behaviour. With

some slight modifications and omissions, the film would certainly make an attractive and amusing one.

T. RANGACHARI.

I thought the scene showing drunken women entirely unnecessary to the story—Very objectionable.

J. D. CRAWFORD.

I agree.

J. COATMAN.

I think some excisions would have been advisable.

A. M. GREEN.

The 7th December 1927.

The Committee had a view of the film known as "Bride No. 13" at the Imperial in Peshawar city on the 30th November evening. The house was fairly crowded with what may be described as illiterate people. The show was not a very good one although the technique may be said to be superior to that of Indian films. The plot was silly and in some parts, especially the cruel torture practised on a woman, repulsive and, but for the fact there is no other cinema show in the city, I doubt whether the Indian audience would have cared to visit the show. On account perhaps of the audience smoking largely, the view was very hazy throughout. On the 1st December it was arranged the Committee should visit both the cinemas in the Cantonment—Cinema-De-Paris and the Empress Cinema. In the former—a British film—"Mons"—was being shown. The audience was not very large. Soldiers mustered in fairly large numbers. It was a fairly good picture—but it is doubtful whether it will attract an Indian audience. The subject matter did not admit of either a plot of much of acting. It was all action picture—and some portions of the film were indistinct. It would mainly interest those only who carefully followed the events of the Great War. After spending nearly an hour at this show myself and Mr. Neogy accompanied by the Secretary proceeded to the Empress Cinema, Colonel Crawford and Mr. Green remaining behind to see through "Mons" to the end. In that theatre there was hardly any audience and the film shown was an American one "The Man who waited". Photography and technique were as usual with pictures from America, very good, the figures and captions appearing most distinctly but the show itself roused very little interest. There was however, nothing objectionable in it.

The Committee (the Chairman, Mr. Neogy, Mr. Green with the Secretary) proceeded to Rawalpindi on the 3rd December visiting Taxilla en route. Sir John Marshall at Taxilla was sounded as to his views about the possibility of writing stories for film purposes taking the discoveries in the ruined cities as basis. He promised to consider the questions carefully on receipt of an official request.

At Rawalpindi the Committee (the Chairman, Mr. Neogy and the Secretary) visited two cinemas one "The Rose Cinema" in the city and the other "The Lansdowne" in the Cantonment. There were three other cinemas in the town. The audience in the city show which was an Indian one "Sati Sardarba"—produced by the "Saraswati Film Co." Bombay—was mainly composed of the average middle class such as small shopkeepers and the captions in the vernacular were read with zest, and there was marked appreciation throughout by the audience of the show. The photography and lighting were good but the acting was poor. In the Cantonment—there was an American film entitled "Fast and Furious" shown which for perfection in acting, technique and scenery may be said to the best we have so far seen. Although there was a love story in the plot there was absolutely nothing in the scenes to which even the most conservative or Puri-

tanic-Indian can take exception. It was fairly a large audience mostly soldiers and Military officers. This film shows that one can produce a most attractive one with love scenes in it while also avoiding objectionable or passionate love-making ones.

T. RANGACHARI.

The 15th December 1927.

At Lucknow we also saw the film, "His Majesty the American". It was a distinctly good show right through—acting, technique, moral tone, good humour being of a high level. At Calcutta I saw a film at the Purna theatre "Blue Danube" said to be an Austrian production but the rights had been purchased by a British firm. Some portions of the love-making scenes were distinctly inciting as can be judged from the shouts from the audience, a large one which was composed mainly of clerks and students.

The Committee had also a view of Indian (Madan's) production, 'Durgesh Nandani'—taken from a well-known Bengali novel by a famous author, Bankim Chandra Chatterji. It was the most crowded theatre the Committee had so far seen, the photography was fairly good, the acting was passable, and the Indian ladies' parts were taken by Anglo-Indian girls—and they did very well indeed. The fact was not patent.

One of the difficulties for the Indian film Industry, is that of finding suitable girls to take women's parts and here is the solution. It was the second week of the show and the enormous crowds showed how popular Indian films are.

On the evening of the 13th, the Committee had a view of another film, "Shankaracharya" by the Indian Kinema Arts, shown in one of the Madan's theatres at Bhawanipore. The attendance especially of Indian ladies was very large, though the picture in almost every respect must be deemed to be poor. This experience showed that any film connected with religion or mythology appeals very largely to the Indian public; it is not the finish of the film which attracts the Indian generally so much as the subject matter.

On the morning of the 14th the Committee visited the Kinema Arts studio at 87, Dharmtala Street where a good beginning is being made for equipping a studio. Apparently a good businessman with finance has taken up this job and if he persists in his attempts he will succeed remarkably well. He has on his staff a trained Director, Mr. Jayagopal Pillai, and an intelligent set of enthusiastic young men.

The Committee had a private view of their production "The Incarnation"—for acting, scenery and general get up it is a praiseworthy attempt, though much cannot be said of the photography. To have spent Rs. 50,000 on 10,000 feet of this film shows there is room for economy and the heavy expenditure is probably due to the fact that the people are new to this business and have not got a regular establishment as yet.

The Committee also visited Madan's studio at Tollygunj—this also is full of promise and at the same time of our visit they were actually shooting a portion of a film they have now on hand. One of the actresses here was a Bengali girl who has just taken to acting for the screen. Here too the studio is not yet complete and there are ample grounds available for establishing a really good studio.

In the evening the Committee visited the Globe where usually only Western films are screened. It is really a grand opera house with a very large seating capacity. The film screened was the Beauty Prize loudly ad-

vertised in the columns of the Calcutta Newspapers—as a drama of petticoat politics in bathing suits. The film itself was a harmless amusement with a fairly good finish about it. There were some kissing scenes but between legitimate couples on suitable occasions. The audience was mostly European and Anglo-Indian—the gallery a large one provided for the four anna ticket holders was empty and this is said to be an ordinary phenomenon here. The Pathe Gazette which preceded the show contained one or two very good films of short length—British production—their fine photography being a prominent feature. There were also three reels depicting the Tunny-Gempsey Boxing match a remarkably realistic exhibition. The attendance was very poor numbering only about 200 all told and very few Indians were seen. The theatre is well-situated—being in front of the New Market, a resort for all classes of people.

T. RANGACHARI.

I also was impressed by the excellence of the English topical gazette at the Globe.

A. M. GREEN.

16-12-27.

The 16th December 1927.

In view of the fact which came out during the evidence of Sir Charles Tegart that the film known as 'Variety' had been banned by the Bengal Board of Film Censors, the Committee arranged to have a private view of the film at Mr. Madan's house. The Committee had previously heard of the great reputation for excellence which that film had acquired in Europe and America and were looking forward to see it on the screen during their stay in Calcutta.

The film 'Variety' under another title 'Vandeville' is a German production in which notable players have taken part. Warwick Ward, the well-known British actor plays an important lead and Miss Lya De Putti gives a performance that places her in the foremost of cinema stars, expressing her art through charm of face and figure in a subtle and enchanting manner, and Emil Jennings plays the part of a side show proprietor and gives an impressive characterisation for gripping and heart-rending emotion. Superb photography and many wonderful shots are seen, particularly those of the interior of a music hall showing glimpses of Chinese equilibrists, flying trapeze acts, and the Tiller girls which turn into visible reality. The performance on the flying trapeze in this production is nothing short of miraculous. It is a magnificent Super Production which obtained the highest number of votes for the ten best pictures of 1926; 'Variety' obtaining 169 and second best 'Benhur' obtaining only 114 and the tenth one 'La Boheme' obtaining only 49. It is a very poor compliment to the judgment of artists and others in Europe and America which India can pay banning the first best picture altogether and by making no less than six excisions in the second best.

The film 'Variety' was shown to the trade in England at the Palace Theatre on the 19th January 1926, and had obtained a certificate of the British Board of Censors and has had a most successful run in other parts of the world. It is difficult to pronounce upon a production of that sort.

I have stated in the above all I could say in its favour. Now I proceed to record my impressions as to its moral tone. The first point which strikes one is that any actress could be found with any claim to decency to lend herself to be treated even for film purposes in the way in which Madam

Lya De Putti allows herself to be shown. Yet she is a Film Star and society woman. I refer especially to the part which shows her as trying to bite the male on the chest in a fit of amorous passion and where also she is shown as enjoying the same man drawing up the stockings for her when a greater part of the leg is exposed in an alluring fashion and also the scene where Emil Jennings is shown kissing her in a most passionate way while she is on her bed, the man mounting over her in a suggestive way.

I agree that these three points are bordering on the obscene, are definitely undesirable and from the point of view of the story unnecessary.

J. D. CRAWFORD.

I agree.

J. COATMAN.

Probably these scenes might be excised and a few other bits might and should be excised for any audience. If actors and actresses in this country are to reach this level of perfection to capture a Western audience, India can never hope to compete in the Western market for no Indian actor or actress even of a most disreputable class is likely to lend himself or herself to this sort of treatment for being shown on the screen. From one point of view there is another remark I should like to make here and that is the moral of the story. It strikes me as a case of misplaced sympathy with a man who actually deserts his wife and child for an enchantress and who when another rival succeeds with that enchantress gets jealous and kills the rival and is deservedly punished and yet at the end of the picture the Governor of the Jail expresses sympathy with this prisoner and calls upon God and man for sympathy for the sufferings of this deserter of his family, the ever-devoted and patient wife being almost ignored. I hope I did not misunderstand the moral of the picture.

In the end he returns to his wife and child having learnt the unreliability of a passionate 'enchantress' as a life companion.

J. D. CRAWFORD.

Having said this much against the film, I cannot help thinking that it is a mistake to ban this film altogether. This is the third film which the Committee had seen of the pictures that have been banned by either Bengal or Bombay. The one film banned by Bombay was the film known as 'His Hour' and another Indian picture 'The Rascal Monk' was also banned. The majority on this Committee took the view on both those cases that the total banning in either case was also a mistake. The first was also a Super Production and the second was a social drama likely to offend a certain section of the Bombay inhabitants was also a good production. My view as regards 'His Hour' is as in case of 'Variety'. It should be passed for exhibition with suitable excisions. If Super Productions of this kind are banned there is no opportunity either for public or for the Industry to understand and appreciate good work and it requires a great courage on the part of India to ban altogether films which by universal opinion in the West acquired excellent reputation and are exhibited without objection even in England where the moral tone of films is stated to be kept at a high level by the producers and by the British Board of Censors. The Indian point of view (if it is to be accepted as a standard) is against women appearing in public and taking part on the stage and may be said to be prudish in many respects, much of what the Indian sees of Western habits, manners and dress of the Westerner especially of the women in this country, in actual life he does not understand and deprecates. But that is no reason why his standard should be aimed at in the matter of censorship of Western Films.

T. RANGACHARI.

I agree generally with what the Chairman says, but, at the same time, we must not allow dazzling excellence of technique to blind us to the sheer indecency of much of this picture. Much of the behaviour depicted was indecent and was meant to represent the passionate moments of a pair of paramours. I don't think the moral is very obtrusive. The male paramour did desert his faithful wife and his baby and there is nothing to suggest that he would ever have repented had not his paramour played him false. He murdered a man for doing something far less heinous than he himself had

done. Altogether this film presents a very difficult problem. The technique is marvellous and much of the film is altogether excellent. But, the indecency runs through it all and I would much rather have the film banned than shown, anywhere in the world, unless all the indecency can be removed.

J. C. COATMAN.

This is a typical example of the censor's difficulties. I agree that the technique is marvellous. I also think that though much of the film is actually indecent and even obscene, yet there is a certain impression of artistic restraint, which is possibly due to the culture of the producer.

As a censor I should have been inclined to point out to the owner of the film my general objections, say that I could not recommend the grant of a certificate for the film as it stood and suggest that he himself should re-edit the film and resubmit it for censorship. Possibly this is also the aim of the Bengal ban.

A. M. GREEN.

17-7-27.

I agree.

J. D. CRAWFORD.

I think this admirable production deserves to be certified subject to two or three excisions.

K. C. NEOGY.

17-12-27.

On the morning of the 15th December, the Committee visited the studio of the Eastern Film Syndicate. It can hardly be said to be a studio—a private house has been loaned to these people who have just begun the venture with some apparatus. They have produced one film "Debdas" which has yet to be screened. We saw two reels of this film in the evening at Mr. Madan's place and for the first attempt and that more or less by amateurs—the photography was very good and their acting and direction fair. The best photographic results have been obtained even for scenes laid inside the rooms of the building. One of the young men in charge is a B.Sc. of the Calcutta University and another is a B.L. They have a few actors and actresses and a short scene for the film which they have now on hand was being shot during the Committee's stay at their studio.

T. RANGACHARI.

On the evening of the 19th December the Committee had a private view of the "Triumph of the Rat" a film which has been passed by the Bombay Board of Censors after it had been rejected by the Bengal Board of Censors. There was first a suspicion that the picture as shown in Bombay might have been different in some respects from the one shown in Bengal; according to Mr. Green's impression there was a difference of about 2,000 feet between the lengths shown in the two places. This was a mistaken impression as the difference is only 1,000 feet and not 2,000 feet and this difference is accounted for by the explanation given by Mr. Lahiri that the trailer which accompanied the film was included in the length given in Bengal and excluded from that shown in Bombay. The actual length was not measured in Bengal and the length of the film was computed on the weight adopted for customs duty which must have been based on the maximum. The Committee are prepared to accept Mr. Lahiri's statement that there was no material alteration in the film as shown in Bengal and Bombay.

"The triumph of the rat" is a sequel to the "Rat" a film which had been passed by the Bengal Board of Censors. That was a story of an

Apache in which the famous film star Ivor Novello plays the leading part. The career of the hero in the "Rat" was more or less in the underworld of Paris. In "The Triumph of the Rat" the story is followed up where the hero begins to reform his ways and Ivor Novello the greatest film star England has ever produced excels himself in playing the part of the gay youth in high society and also in giving a great screen performance as a tattered starving and forlorn thrown-out, cast away from society. The moral in the picture is the triumph of a man's soul in the face of depth of degradation and misery brought upon him by a jealous woman who wishes in vain to capture him from her successful rival. Human nature at its best and its worst is depicted in this film in a marvellously eloquent way by the splendid acting displayed. Gay life is here and there shown in this film; but it is no better or no worse than for instance in the "Merry Widow" and other social drama films the Committee has seen. The Committee were unanimously of opinion that there is nothing in the moral tone of this picture that should be taken exception to. On the other hand the triumph of the soul over alluring temptation under trying conditions is a great lesson in itself. This film is one of the rare efforts on the part of the British artists to compete in the film world with far advanced America and other foreign countries and for technique and perfection the film may be certified as something out of the ordinary and it is a pity that India should be obliged to turn down a British effort of this kind on account of her prudery in censorship. The "Rat" had a full chorus from the famous Folies Bergere in Paris; that has been approved for India and yet the "Triumph of the Rat" is turned down.

T. RANGACHARI.

20-12-27.

I agree. If the two films be compared, that certified by the Bengal Board seems to me to have the lower moral tone.

A. M. GREEN.

21-12-27.

The 21st December 1927.

Since my last note on the "Triumph of the Rat" the Committee has also seen the "Rat". Having seen this the moral value of the "Triumph of the Rat" is largely enhanced. How great is the triumph of the Soul is made more patent to one who sees both the films. There is more of the gay world and under-world life in the "Rat" than in the "Triumph of the Rat". There is a positively objectionable part in the "Rat"—of a coarse fighting scene between women which I would like to have omitted. I am all the more convinced that the "Triumph of the Rat" should not have been banned.

T. RANGACHARI.

The 23rd December 1927.

After my last note on the "Rat" and the "Triumph of the Rat", we had the advantage of hearing the notes made by the Inspector of Films and the notes made by the Sub-Committee of the Bengal Board on these films, read out to us by Mr. McKay. We noticed the very points noted by them, but on the whole I see no reason to alter the view I formed about those films as already recorded.

The Committee had also the advantage of having read out to them the notes on "Variety"—There is some doubt thrown on the fact whether the

film was allowed to be exhibited in Britain at all and there is also the fact mentioned by Mr. McKay that an abridged version of the film has been produced by the same producers. I have asked for further information and in the light of these facts I should like to reconsider my position as regards that film.

Myself and Mr. Neogy saw a film known as "The Only Woman"—an American production. It was a social drama full of life and fun and on the whole an attractive one, free from any objectionable stuff. From the slight shock, which I noticed, a fighting scene gave to my grand-child of about 8 years of age—I am inclined to the view that some sort of classification of films may have to be resorted to.

T. RANGACHARI.

On the 5th the Committee (the Chairman, Mr. Neogy, Sir Ebrahim Haroon Jaffer and Mr. Green) visited the Wellington Cinema for an hour and saw a portion of "Bride 13"—a portion different from what they saw at Peshawar but a continuation of the same; the technique was good, there were the usual thrilling scenes—a woman being shown grossly ill-treated by a number of rowdies—coloured people being engaged for practising the tortures. That film was one which need not have been passed at all for exhibition though there was not anything of sex element in it which was objectionable. The audience was not large and comprised some Europeans and Anglo-Indians.

The same evening later the Committee had a view of "North of 36" another good one for technique but a poor show. There was nothing objectionable in the portions the Committee viewed. The audience here too was not large.

On the 6th the Committee had a view of "Ali Baba and the Forty Robbers"—a production by the Imperial Film Co., at Bombay. The Committee when at Bombay saw that studio when it was busy with this production and on the whole the film was a good one—technique fairly good also. The Chairman, Sir Ebrahim Jaffer, Mr. Neogy and Mr. Coatsman attended this inspection. The audience was very large though it was the end of the second week of the show at this Cinema—Kinema Central—which has not a very large seating capacity.

On the 7th the Committee, i.e., the Chairman and Mr. Neogy with the Secretary visited the Crown and the Liberty Cinemas in the heart of the Indian city where "Fighting Marine" preceded by a short Harold Lloyd film, and "Fire Fighter" were being shown. In both places the managers explained that Indian pictures which were costly did not draw audiences and they were showing only serials where scenes of fighting were exhibited. The audiences in both places were fairly large and showed appreciation here and there.

On the 9th—The Committee, the Chairman and Mr. Neogy,—saw at the Globe Cinema the film known as the "Strong Man" an attempt at imitating Charlie Chaplin by Harry Langdon. The house was thin—upstairs empty; a few Anglo-Indians were present in the Re. 1 class. The man in charge (the management has recently changed hands) said they showed only Western films though they did not draw always for fear that if they showed Indian films their programme will fail to appeal.

T. RANGACHARI.

10-1-28.

The 11th January 1928.

On the 10th the Committee (the Chairman, Sir Ebrahim Haroon Jaffer and Mr. K. C. Neogy including the Secretary) visited the Wellington Cinema where a film with an attractive title "Kiss me Again" was being shown. The Chairman decided to visit the show for 2 reasons. One the title and secondly there was a suggestive poster advertising the show outside the

Cinema on the occasion of the former visit. This poster was also referred to by a witness Mrs. Jinarajadasa. The attendance was very poor, hardly 3 dozen. The film itself was on the whole unexceptionable and really conveyed a good lesson to husbands who over-enthusiase on business and neglect their wives.

"Kiss me again" was after all the title of a song. The portion shown in the poster was not so prominent in the film itself.

T. RANGACHARI.

The 19th January 1928.

On the 16th January the Committee (the Chairman, Sir Ebrahim Haroon Jaffer, Mr. Neogy and Mr. Green with the Secretary) visited the Dagon Theatre where, usually Burmese films are shown by Madans. The audience which was fairly large was entirely Burman. The story centres round a blind child of the King, discarded by him, and a lot of supernatural scenes are introduced in the film which were thoroughly enjoyed by the audience—Burmese captions which were long and tedious were eagerly read. There is a noisy Orchestra including a woman who in her songs introduces the important items in the story for the benefit of the audience. Considering the very short period the film industry in Burma has had, the technique in photography and acting must be said to be superior to what we find in Indian films. The peculiar feature in Rangoon appears to be that Burmese films are seen by Burmans, Indian films are seen by Indians, Chinese films mostly by Chinese and a few Burmans. It is the western films which find patronage among all classes though not to the same extent.

On the 17th January (the Chairman, Mr. Neogy with the Secretary) paid hurried visits to the Excelsior, Elphinstone, Star and the Kinema-de-Paris. At the Excelsior a western film "Fast and Furious" was shown—the box office receipt was poor. At the Elphinstone "Ramayana" a Madan production was screened the captions in Gujarati being unduly long and involved. The audience was entirely Indian—mostly Bombay side people with a sprinkling of Tamilians and Telugus in the four anna class. The picture was not very good as the acting and photography left much to be desired. At the Star a Burman film was being shown, the audience was not very large. The audience was as usual entirely Burman. At the Kinema-de-Paris where two Indian pictures were shown (14,000 feet in all) one a social drama "The Nurse" and "Urvashi" a mythological story; and the audience, entirely Indian, contributed only Rs. 81 as box office receipts.

On the morning of the 18th January, the Committee (the Chairman, Sir Ebrahim Haroon Jaffer, Mr. Neogy and Mr. Green with the Secretary) saw a Chinese film "The Rich Man's Daughter"—a Shanghai production of 14 reels. It was stated that there was objection raised by a Sub-Committee of two members of the Burma Board of Censors, to the moral tone of this film and after viewing 6 reels they refused to complete the inspection and the whole Board is viewing the film in consequence.

As a film production the Chinese effort is certainly better than the Burmese or Indian ones and there was nothing to which exception could be taken by any of us. The moral was obvious to rich parents now not to bring up their children. The film was objected to by the two members on the ground of its low moral tone and crudeness of language in the captions (the use of the word 'concubine' instead of 'mistress' for instance was objected to). On the whole we are satisfied that up to the 7th reel there is nothing to which a liberal Censorship Board could legitimately object and much less to give ground for rejection.

In the evening the Committee, same as in the morning, visited the Globe, the Plaza and the Olympia. At the Globe they had Western topicals and "The Beauty Prize". The audience was mixed. They had 17 in the first class, 26 in the second class, 23 in the eight annas and 65 in the four

annas seats and the collection altogether amounting to Rs. 88. At the Plaza "The Code of the Sea" a good western film was being shown with thrilling scenes of rescues and a storm at sea. The audience was mixed and not large. At the Olympia, a "Cow boy" film (western) was shown. The audience was not large either. There were 40 free in the reserved seats and 13 free in the 1st class. There were 5 in the reserved seats paying, 2nd class 22, 3rd class 82 and a total attendance of 162, of whom 53 were free. In the Burmese shows also a large number of free passes are issued to friends and relations of actors and actresses.

T. RANGACHARI.

The 21th January 1928.

On the 22nd, the Committee, i.e., the Chairman and Mr. Neogy with the Secretary visited the Elphinstone Palace at Maymyo. They had the usual show at 6-30 p.m. A western film of a very attractive kind—"In the Palace of the King" was being shown. The audience was very poor and hardly numbered 20. There were two sepoys in uniform among them. Indian and Burmese are also shown in this theatre along with Western ones. This is the slack season it seems, for Maymyo. During the season, Europeans and Anglo-Indians are the chief patrons. There was no complaint in private conversations about the nature of the films shown. The projector was not a good one and the lighting was weak.

On the 23rd the Committee, i.e., the Chairman, Mr. Neogy and Mr. Green with the Secretary visited the Elphinstone, the New Theebaw and the Globe at Mandalay between 6-30 and 7-45 p.m. In the first, western films "The Barrier" and "Laughing at Danger" were shown. The audience was fairly large, numbering in all 272, of whom the four annas class numbered 157 and 8 annas class 73. On Saturday the 21st, the audience for the same hour numbered 740 (464, 4 annas class and 237, 2nd class). This theatre showed Indian pictures last week with some success. ("The Jewelled Arrow" and "Krishna Naradhi" were shown.)

At the New Theebaw, a Burmese film was shown, rather a poor one and a first show. The audience numbered 474 (4th class 195, 3rd class 248). At the Globe a Chinese film was shown where special rates were levied for the day—the Chinese New Year's day. Total collections Rs. 230, 10 at Rs. 3; 15 at Rs. 2; 110 at Re. 1; and 120 at 8 annas, the audience being mostly Chinese. The film was a fairly good one and superior to the ordinary Burmese and Indian ones. The Manager of the Globe complained that showing of Burmese films was not a paying proposition in this theatre as Theebaw showed always Burmese films and commanded the good productions.

T. RANGACHARI.

The 25th January 1928.

The "Java", by which we are returning to Rangoon from Mandalay, made a halt of a few hours at Myingyan (11 A.M. to 2 P.M.). The Deputy Commissioner, Mr. Sitzler, I.C.S., the Superintendent of Police and the Agent Chettiar (Mr. Chettiar) of S. R. M. R. M. firm met us at the jetty and took us round and gave hospitality. The Committee took advantage of the halt and inspected the local cinema house "The Picture Dome" run by the Globe people. The local Manager—a Madrasi—explained to the Committee the position (in this small town with a population of about 19,000) of the cinema trade. They mainly show western pictures and occasionally Burmese films also. Once in a way they show Chinese films. Once they showed also an Indian film which was not a success. This week they are showing a western film "The Perils of Patrick" where Charlie Chaplin plays a prominent part. The show opened on Monday last. The

first performance attracted 4 in the first (Rs. 2) class; Re. 1 seats 29; in the As. 8 class 33; As. 4, 97; and 267 As. 2; in all a sum of Rs. 130 was collected. In the 2nd performance, the audience comprised 2 of As. 8, 33 of As. 4 and 17 of As. 2. The last occasion on which they showed a Burmese film was more than 2 months ago. On that occasion at the 1st show there were 1 in the Rs. 2 class; 9 in the Re. 1 class; 113 in the As. 8 class; 258 in the As. 4 class; 56 children (two anna 1); Rs. 139 in all. On the 2nd and 3rd days for both shows each day they collected Rs. 103 and Rs. 55 respectively. The local manager explained that for the Burmese productions they pay 55 or 60 per cent. of the proceeds to the producer, they themselves bearing all charges, and it does not pay them to show Burmese films. Their receipts last month amounted to Rs. 1,445 and their daily expenditure came to Rs. 40. As the Globe show western films very largely in their circuit, it is perhaps more easy for them to show western films in this small branch show. The cinema house itself is a poor concern.

T. RANGACHARI.

The 28th January 1928.

On the 25th evening when the Committee halted at Pakkoku, they had information that a travelling cinema was showing some films in the local public hall. The Chairman went to the spot, but the travelling company had closed their show the previous evening and had gone on. On the 27th morning during the halt at Yenangyoung, the Committee visited "The Apollo" run by the Globe circuit people. From Wednesday last they are showing here "The Last Chance" advertised to be "a story of Yankee grit and pluck". They show only western pictures here and there is also a small cinema house in the place where Burmese films are shown. The local manager says that the Apollo is not drawing a good house either. The Committee have called for figures from last Saturday. The cinema house is a fairly good one and is showing "The Beauty Prize" to-morrow. The Burmese house is a poor one. This place, though not a district headquarters, has got a cinema or two whereas Magwe, the district and division headquarters, has none. Yenangyoung is the place where oil wells industry flourishes and industrial labour congregates. Hence apparently the cinema house has come to stay. I should add the whole of this area and the various processes in oil extraction including drilling and refinement are fit subjects for a series of instructive and effective popular films for being shown in India and Burma. So also is the area covered by the multitude of ancient pagodas in Pagan. These films may also have great international value.

At Magwe there is a hall owned by a Burmese which is now and then used for cinema shows of Western films.

At Thayetmyo and Allenmyo, two small towns on the opposite banks of the river, there are reasonably spacious halls which are let to Travelling cinemas showing mostly Burmese films. These shows visit these parts sometimes twice a month. On the 28th a Burmese film is being shown at Thayetmyo and the handbill in circulation is attached.

T. RANGACHARI.

The 30th January 1928.

During the 2 or 3 hours of waiting for the train at Prome on the 28th evening—the Committee had a view of the 2 cinema houses there. Both of them show only Burmese films. The one the Committee viewed at one of the cinema houses was a very poor production—the audience was not large—the building itself is a poor one. In the other place there was a variety performance which included a Burmese film. There was a counter attraction in the town in the shape of a very popular Pwe troupe who had their

opening performance that evening. One of the cinema Proprietors explained he found great difficulty in getting Western films at a paying rate. On the 29th (Sunday) morning the Committee inspected the Studios named in the margin.* The London Art Studio is fairly well-equipped and is using arc lights. Owing to a misunderstanding of the instructions given to the proprietors none of the studios was doing any actual work of shooting films. The 2 best, the 1st and 2nd, produce about 5 or 6 films each year, of which some are good and some bad. None of the studios here has any artist or technician who has been in the West. A great deal remains to be done to improve this industry here, which supplies a national want. The 3rd one is a new venture which promises well as the grounds chosen are spacious and the work so far is done with foresight and knowledge and the people concerned are fairly respectable.

T. RANGACHARI.

The 6th February 1928.

On the last day of the Committee's meetings at Rangoon—Colonel Crawford who had seen the film "Second to None" the previous evening, mentioned that it was very good British effort. The Committee (the Chairman, Mr. Green and Colonel Crawford with the Secretary) viewed the film at the Globe. The first three-quarters of an hour was taken up with certain topical gazettes which included an educational film in the shape of a short comedy depicting a timber country—large sized timber—methods of felling and transport. "Second to none" is the title of the main film dealing with the British Navy. There was not very much in the story itself, which, while it involved a love entanglement, did not give scope for including any underworld life. The Navy portion of the picture was a distinctly good show—the photography in the latter portions was very clear—the acting was somewhat above the average. On the whole it was a fairly good film. But it is doubtful whether it will have an attraction to others than British. The title itself is a challenge to other naval powers and the film is more or less an emphasis on Britain's position as a Naval Power and naturally appeals to the Britisher's sense of pride in his own country and consequently not likely to have an international value or attraction.

The film, while it is really good, cannot be said to have come up to the level of the best film productions of the world.

T. RANGACHARI.

What I chiefly liked about the film was the entire absence of vulgarity and the absolutely clean atmosphere. I agree that the film is too British in tone, humour and atmosphere to have a great international value outside the British Commonwealth of Nations.

A. M. GREEN.

13-2-28.

I agree.

J. D. CRAWFORD.

The 13th February 1928.

On the evening of the 6th February at Nagpur, the Committee (the Chairman, Sir Ebrahim and Mr. Green with the Secretary) had a view of one of the Kolhapur Maharashtra Film Company's productions Murali Wala connected with Sri Krishna's life at the Buldi picture house at its 6-15 P.M. show.

The film was introduced by sudden change of programme brought about apparently by the Producer's agent herein order to give the Committee an opportunity of witnessing one of their productions. The house was fairly full notwithstanding the short notice. Some 4 or 5 of the British soldiers who came to see the other advertised film. "The Answer of the Sea", a western production, about which see below, braved it and sat on to see this Indian film.

This film is certainly a good one—both acting and photography—and the subject of the story itself is a most popular one. It is well-handed—the English captions being apt and brief and the direction of the film, on the whole, must have been in capable hands. The actors and actresses made a fairly good impression and were neither slow nor tedious. This company has its studio in an Indian State and has a good reputation. It is a pity we are not able to visit their studio.

T. RANGACHARI.

I thought the studio scenes displayed the best technique of any Indian film I have yet seen. I gathered this was due to the use of artificial lighting.

A. M. GREEN.

J. COATMAN.

The 13th February 1928.

In consequence of certain criticisms made about it—the Committee (the Chairman and Mr. Green) viewed a western film known as "The Answer of the Sea" formerly "Undine" at the Buldi Picture House at Nagpur on the 7th night at 9-30 P.M. The film is based on a fairy tale relating to Sea nymphs and Forest nymphs and where living human beings take their part it is but natural there should be a certain amount of exposure of the human frame. Making due allowance for all that and for art, this film must be said to have crossed the border line of decency, in that dozens of girls absolutely and almost naked appear on the surface of water swimming with their buttocks exposed and in some places their front exposed also. As a fairy tale it has no lesson to convey. It is designed to be a feast for the eyes and cannot but have a most suggestive sex influence on the young and old alike and to children for whom the fairy tales are intended, it is not desirable they should see adult frames in their nakedness. This film might with advantage have been banned altogether without detriment to any one. Fairy tales need not be vivified in this matter and at any rate considerable portions should not have been enacted at all and should have been cut off. This film appears to have been passed quite recently by the Bombay Board of Censors.

Before passing any final opinion it is better to call for a report from the Bombay Board of Censors as to the circumstances under which this came to be passed together with the notes of the Inspector and the Proceedings of the Board. The Bombay Board may also be requested to ascertain the previous history of this film whether it was shown in England and was passed in other countries. What is the country of origin of this film? It is understood that the Universal's Agency is distributing this film.

I think I must add that after seeing this film there is no doubt in my mind that the fact (it is not a question of representation or misrepresentation of western life on the screen in this case) that so many western girls are available for exposing their bodies in this manner is bound to create a deservedly bad impression about western morals in this country. What is the remedy? Merely hiding or concealing the fact will be no remedy. Public opinion in the West, if it disapproves of such exposure, should avert itself in a vigorous manner if they wish to preserve their reputation in the

East. Shutting out such films from the East is no answer or remedy to the social disease such as this appears to indicate. Concealment is no cure. The film will have to be banned if at all only on grounds that it is likely to affect this country's morals.

On the evening of the 8th, the Committee (the Chairman with the Secretary) visited another cinema house, the Craddock Cinema, Nagpur, where an Indian film known as *Bansari Bala* was shown. It was a product of the Sharda Film Company and was not at all a good show. The photography was poor. The acting was too slow and tedious and on the whole it was not a good production. The audience, fairly large, appreciated the film all the same.

T. RANGACHARI.

The 20th February 1928.

One of the witnesses examined at Delhi last week referred to a show which was being given at the Elphinstone Picture Palace, Delhi, as an example of objectionable ones. The objection was understood to relate to the film then being shown "Man Handled" a Paramount picture in 7 reels. In conjunction with the cinema show "2 classical modern dancers" Ryllish Hasoutra and Dora Duby advertised as "two famous Vaudeville Artists" gave dancing performances so that there was "a double attraction" to quote the hand-bill.

The Committee (the Chairman, Sir Ebrahim and Mr. Green) viewed the show on the 18th at 6 p.m. The prices were Rs. 4, 3, 2, 1 and As. 8. The body of the hall was very full. The superior seats were sparsely occupied by European and Indian ladies and gentlemen. The bulk of the audience may be said to belong to the trading and merchant class. The film itself was a fairly good one, and the story revealed the temptations to which attractive shop-girls earning poor wages are exposed in big cities the girl in this case coming through unscathed though "Man-handled" true to her original love to a man of her class. The acting of that girl Gloria Swanson was superb and the whole film may be said to be a model production for handling a delicate subject in an effectively suggestive way without undue vulgarity or indecorous or offensive scenes. Photography and settings were of a superior order.

If the witness was referring to the film, he must be a puritan of a very high unpracticable order but if he was referring to the dancers there is considerable justification for his disgust. The dancing was perfectly artistic and enjoyable except one portion when one of the girls performed some very difficult but disgusting movements with her hip joints and surrounding parts. This last naturally provoked derisive laughter from the audience from those who could not restrain themselves. Most portions of the human frame were visible and exhibited to advantage in attractive surroundings and settings in most of the dances. There was an apology for covering here and there and such exhibitions in actual flesh and muscle of the feminine grace and frame are much more likely to be harmful to the impressionable and produce impressions about western folk than any number of nude scenes in mere moving pictures. These are said to be "Stars of London, Paris and New York".

I asked an apparently educated Pathan gentleman who was sitting next to me as to what he thought of the show. He was one of those who indulged in that laughter referred to above. He said it was "stupid and we see them as 'modern improvements'".

The Indian cannot and does not appreciate so much nudity in public performances. In the golden idol said to be the "sensation of New York and Paris" Ryllish Hasoutra did some marvellous feats in assuming postures known to Yogis of old in India.

T. RANGACHARI.

I saw the entertainment on the previous evening and agree particularly to the Chairman's remarks about the sensual dancing of Ryllish Hasoutra in the Indian dancing girl scene.

J. D. CRAWFORD.

I also very much disliked the insertion of the "Danse du ventre", the home of which is the Middle East, into the Indian dancing girl scene. It was disgusting.

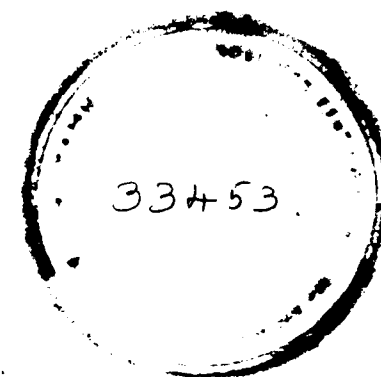
A. M. GREEN.

22-2-28.

I agree with the remarks made by the Chairman.

IBRAHIM JAFFER.

23-2-28.



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