

Law (1921) Department.
(Education)

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G.O. No. 1056

DATED 19-7-1921

[Despatch Abstract.]

Kinematograph Exhibition.

Mr. Wetherill's report on the education—
and exhibition held in London in February 1921—Government of
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No. **669**
 Government of India.
 Department of Education.
 (Education).
 Simla, the **13th** May 1921.

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18/5/21

From

Dr. Wali Mohammad, M.A., Ph.D.,
 Assistant Secretary to the Government of India;

To

The Secretary to the Government of Madras,
 Home (Education) Department.

Sir,

I am directed to forward for the information of the local Government - , a copy of the report written by Mr. H.B.Wetherill, I.E.S., United Provinces, on the Educational Kinematograph Exhibition and Conference held in London from the 12th to the 19th February 1921.

2. Mr. Wetherill attended this Conference as the representative of the Secretary of State for India.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

Wali Mohammad

Assistant Secretary to the Government of India.

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Abstract
Kinematograph exhibition

Mr. Wetherill's report on the educational exhibition held in London in Feb. 21 -

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Report on Educational Kinematograph Exhibition & Conference
Royal Horticultural Hall,
Westminster (Feb. 12th to 19th 1921).

The Kinematograph Exhibition had little educational interest. There were a considerable number of stalls, in which were shown Picture Palace accessories. I was unable to discover that any firm had made a speciality of Kinematography for Schools or Colleges.

I ascertained from the promoters that the Educational Conference was a single sitting at 5 p.m. on Feb. 15th. At this meeting a number of speakers assured their audience of the value of the Kinematograph for Educational purposes, but their remarks were of a general nature and unconvincing. A few questions were asked about expense provision of films, and the relative advantages of using existing picture palaces or special rooms in schools for demonstration. From the replies to these questions, it was obvious that Kinematography for schools is very much in the experimental stage and that educational bodies hesitated to lay out money on such a luxury.

The promoters of the exhibition treated us to some excellent films. The first showed a river from source to mouth, but it seemed to me that the idea of movement was wrongly introduced as there was little of it in the picture itself, but the impression of scenery as observed from a train was given. A good set of slides would have been more useful and less expensive for the demonstration. The second film showed silk production and sections of it were excellent, in particular the one that demonstrated the movement of the caterpillar enveloping itself in self spun silk. Such films would be most valuable in the teaching of natural history, but I cannot think of a sufficient number of processes, that could be treated with equal success, to guarantee sanction for the expenditure.

In the course of a short discussion on the possibilities of the Kinematograph in schools, two gentlemen from the audience gave their

their experiences. One had been most unfortunate. His experiment had resulted in a considerable financial loss, due to the damage of a film and his inability to get any more. The other assured us that he had been using the Kinematograph in his school for years, to the infinite enjoyment of his pupils, but his appreciation of its value as an instrument of education lost some of its point when he remarked that another feature of his school was a toy railway run by electricity.

I have addressed the Secretary of the Exhibition and have asked him to supply me with information on the following points,

- (a) the cost of installation and the provision of films.
- (b) the likelihood of finding expert workmen in India as operators and repairers.
- (c) the extent to which the Kinematograph has been adopted in educational institutions in Western Countries.
- (d) the precautions necessary against accidents.

So far I have not had any reply to my letter. Knowing the conditions in India I cannot recommend the adoption of the Kinematograph in the schools of that country, until exhaustive and successful experiments have been made elsewhere. Even if the Kinematograph were definitely found to be as valuable an instrument of instruction as its advocates declare, expenditure on such luxurious apparatus would be inadvisable at the present when there are such important calls upon the public purse as the urgent necessity for improvement of teachers salaries, the need for better hygienic conditions for more careful medical instruction, for the higher education of teachers etc. If at some future time funds were available, great cities with central schools might establish Kinema theatres for groups of Schools, but I cannot foresee the introduction of the Kinematograph into smaller cities, where there is no electric installation.

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A.K.B.

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