

National Council of Women of Great Britain.

Report of an Enquiry into Film Censorship,

Conducted by the Cinema Committee.

1931

Chairman: MRS. OGILVIE GORDON, D.Sc., J.P.

Preamble.

The report here submitted represents a survey of that aspect of Cinema administration which concerns the censoring of films in Great Britain. The Cinema to-day occupies an important place in the life of the nation, and is a constant source of happiness to thousands of people, rich and poor alike. It exercises in its proper use a powerful and beneficent influence upon the community: its cultural and educational possibilities are unlimited, whilst as an instrument of propaganda it stands on a level with Broadcasting and the Press. These are truisms, but it is because of them that thoughtful people are so anxious to keep the moving picture industry free from any taint of corruption of morals.

It is from this standpoint that the following report has been prepared. At the same time, careful consideration has been given to certain important practical considerations, the first being that the motion picture industry is primarily a commercial undertaking and must thus cater for popular feeling as reflected in the revenue obtained at the Box Offices; the second, that certain films suitable for adult exhibition would, if shown to children, be most unsuitable.

Terms of Reference of the Enquiry.

At the Annual Meeting of the National Council of Women held in Portsmouth in October, 1930, a resolution was submitted urging the Government to set up a Departmental Committee to enquire into the question of Film Censorship and matters connected there-

344-
0531
NAT

Pamphlet

with. Mrs. Ogilvie Gordon moved the following amendment, which was carried:—

“That in view of the recent appointment of a new President of the Board of Film Censors and the fact that the ‘model rules’ issued December, 1929, by the Home Office have just been accepted by a number of the Cinema Licensing Authorities, it is premature to ask for public intervention on the part of the Government. The National Council of Women accordingly refers this Resolution back to its Cinema Committee with request that they consider it in the light of the newer developments and report to the Executive before the next Annual Meeting.”

The discussion showed clearly that all were in agreement as to the urgent need for more stringent supervision over the kind of films displayed, while one speaker after another accentuated the unfortunate effect such films were bound to have upon young folk and children, many of whom sit through the display of “A” films although these are marked by the Censor as “suitable for adult audiences,” and even where the “Model Rules” of the Home Office have been put into operation attend unaccompanied by a parent or bonâ fide guardian.

Two obvious directions of enquiry emerged from the discussion. (1) To consider whether it was practicable, under the present *Voluntary System of Censorship* by a *Board of Film Censors* nominated by the Cinema Trade and approved by the Home Office, to prevent the distribution of films based on unsuitable subjects and calculated to have a detrimental effect on public morals, or whether a *National Board of Film Censors* with statutory powers under Government should be set up.

(2) To investigate the working of the “Model Rules” recommended by the Home Office and to consider to what extent their adoption by all licensing authorities could be expected; and whether, if this were effected, it would meet the needs of the situation.

The Cinema Committee accordingly drew up a Questionnaire to be circulated to the N.C.W. Branches and appointed a Sub-Committee to conduct the special enquiry and to draft a report. The Sub-Committee included Mrs. Keynes, President of the N.C.W., and the other honorary officers and two members of the Cinema Committee, together with one representative from each of the following: the Scottish Branches, the Birmingham Branch, the Public Service Committee, the Women Citizens’ Section, the Mothers’ Union and the London Public Morality Council. Four

meetings were held under the Chairmanship of Mrs. Ogilvie Gordon.

The Scottish Branches, while wishing to keep in touch with the Sub-Committee, were themselves taking part in an Enquiry on Cinema matters in Scotland, where the powers of the local licensing authorities differ considerably from those in England and Wales.

Pronouncement of the Home Secretary on “Film Censorship.”

In reply to various requests for the appointment of a Departmental Committee of Enquiry into the question of film censorship, Mr. Clynes stated in the House of Commons in December, 1930:—

“that he had given careful consideration to this matter. It was not always recognised that a power of censoring films was vested in the local authorities. The local authorities relied for the most part on the systematic examination of all films by the Board of Film Censors, but their power of censorship remained in reserve. He was aware that there were signs of growing uneasiness in the public mind as to the tone of many films now exhibited, and he welcomed this evidence of public concern because he believed that the pressure of public opinion could alone bring about an improvement. There was, however, some confusion of thought in the idea that a change of the system of censorship would provide a remedy. He doubted if an enquiry by a Commission representative of different interests and points of view would be of much assistance. He had no reason to believe that any alternative system so far proposed would produce better results or command general support, or that the standard of censorship in this country was not at least as high as that in any other. The public exhibition of certain films would give rise to difficulty under any form of censorship, and it was doubtful whether any better system could be devised than one which left the local authority free to allow or prohibit the exhibition of such films in their own area according to the circumstances. While he was not prepared to appoint a Committee of Enquiry, he was considering whether any steps could be taken to secure a more continuous contact between the Board and representative local opinion.”

The weak spot in the present system appears to be the comparative isolation of the Board from “representative local opinion,” for while it is in touch with the Cinema Trade Associations and Producing Companies, it only comes into touch with the licensing authorities when it sends them the lists of films passed. From the Home Secretary’s suggestion of a “more continuous contact”

there has sprung up a very general desire for the formation of a Consultative Committee, which should keep in touch with the Board of Film Censors—the members to be mainly drawn from the local Licensing Authorities, and to include representatives from the Home Office, the Board of Trade Film Advisory Committee, the Film Censor, the Film Producers and possibly social organisations. Such a Committee would bring together parties interested in all aspects of the Censorship of Films, and would contribute towards better understanding and co-ordination.

Open letter ^{from} to the President of the British Board of Film Censors.

A few weeks after the Home Secretary's statement, the following communication was made by the Rt. Hon. Edward Shortt, P.C., K.C., President of the British Board of Film Censors, to all film companies, and published in the press:—

“In our last reports attention has been drawn to the tendency to produce incidents of prolonged and gross brutality and sordid themes, which, it must be admitted, are unwholesome and repugnant to large sections of the audiences in this country.

Such films have required drastic eliminations and modifications before they could receive the Board's certificates.

Of late it has been noticed with regret that films are being produced in which the development of the theme necessitates a continuous succession of grossly brutal and sordid scenes, accompanied, in the case of auditory films, with sounds that accentuate the situation and nauseate the listener.

No modification, however drastic, can render such films suitable for public exhibition. In consequence, the Board takes this opportunity of notifying the trade that in future no film will receive the Board's certificate in which the theme, without any redeeming characteristic, depends upon the intense brutality or unrelieved sordidness of the scenes depicted.”

This letter shows the high sense of public duty of the British Board of Film Censors, but it may conceivably have little effect on the kind of films produced, since most of these are of American origin. It is all-important that the support of public opinion throughout the country should be given to the Board's appeal and should make itself felt in the U.S.A. as a vital factor in Cinema trade.

As the result of the interchange of views between many of the Voluntary Societies in this country—especially the London Public Morality Council—and the American Motion-Picture

Producers and Distributors a “New Code for American Producers” was published on March 31st, 1930, in which an undertaking is given to “produce no picture which will lower the moral standards of those who see it,” and which enumerates certain tendentious subjects which will not in future be presented.

The new films have not yet been released to any extent, but if carried out, this Code will mark a big step forward in America, while the letter of the Board's President may be expected to lead to an improvement in the moral tone of British films. It is with regret that we read of some of the British films being banned by the Censor of the Commonwealth of Australia.

The Statutory Authorities under the Cinematograph Act, 1909.

The Cinematograph Act, 1909, empowered the County and County Borough Councils, or certain other bodies to which they delegated these powers, to grant licenses for the Cinema Theatres in their area, provided that these complied with the statutory regulations made by the Secretary of State with a view to the safety of the public, and were issued “*on such terms and conditions and under such restrictions as, subject to regulations of the Secretary of State, the Council may by the respective licences determine.*” The system under the Act was one of local control, pure and simple. In addition, under this Act the Lord Chamberlain is the licensing authority for some 40 theatres under his jurisdiction.

The Censorship and the Sub-division of Films “A” and “U.”

The Board of Film Censors came into being three or four years later, when the need for some form of reliable censorship of the films shown was being more and more felt. Unofficial consultations took place between members of the trade, leading officials in the Home Office, and members of the House of Commons, when it was decided that the censorship should be voluntary and not statutory in character, and that the members of the Board of Film Censors, while paid by the trade, should be absolutely independent in the exercise of their censorship duties.

The Enquiry Sub-Committee has been informed that a consultative committee of exhibitors, renters, and producers meets with the Board when there are questions of policy to decide, but no questions are ever asked as to why a film has or has not been passed. The trade has never influenced their decisions.

The Board of Film Censors had from the inception of their work found it necessary to divide the films into (1) films which they considered suitable for *universal* exhibition and marked as “U”

films; (2) films which they considered suitable for exhibition to "adults" only and marked as "A" films.

Had the exhibitors been able to make up their programmes according to their own choice, doubtless some of them would have provided two types of programmes, one of "U" films only, and the other of "A" films for audiences over 16 years of age. But unfortunately there appear to be difficulties concerning the method of releasing and booking films which make it practically impossible for exhibitors to arrange their programmes in this way. For example, film producing companies usually arrange to produce a certain number of films over a stated period of time, and frame a "line-up" to show exactly how many productions will be made and released and in what order. The renting firms which arrange for the distribution of the films and act in the capacity of middlemen, are accordingly obliged to release their films much in the order in which they are made.

Then again, for the purposes of distribution, cinema theatres are divided into runs—1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th runs—and in any particular town the 1st run theatres—which are invariably the better-class houses—book the films for exhibition immediately they are released by the renter. Subsequently the films pass by stages through the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th run theatres, each in turn paying less for their hire. For example, in a city such as Birmingham a first-run theatre might pay 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ % of their takings for hire of a film, whereas other theatres in the same city and for the same film may pay only 25%, 15% or even 10%, the difference being due to the fact that the 1st run theatres are entitled to show the films first, when public interest is naturally keenest.

It will therefore be clear that an exhibitor cannot easily plan his bookings, and that what he shows will be regulated by the character of his theatre,—first, second or third-run,—the Company from whom he books his productions and the date of release of the films.

The matter is further complicated by the fact that many theatres are controlled by circuits, which appear to have understandings with particular renting firms to take a fixed percentage of their product.

The whole system of trading in films has been so definitely established on American business methods that, so long as the present high proportion of American films continues to be shown, there is little prospect of exhibitors being able to institute reforms in the arrangement of their programmes except within narrow limits.

Under this system most programmes include both "U" and

"A" films, and children may be admitted with adults, except in the few places where the local licensing authorities are now excluding children up to 16 years of age from "A" films. This does not, of course, refer to specially-arranged matinees for children, which are outside the ordinary programme.

The Powers of the Licensing Authorities.

In the early years of the Board's work there was a tendency among certain of the Licensing Authorities to disregard the censorship of the Board. The Report of the Board for the year 1921 contains the following passage:

"Whilst many of the Licensing Authorities throughout the country had included a clause in their licences under the Cinematograph Act, 1909, to the effect that only films must be exhibited which have been passed by the Board, there were several important authorities who were not quite sure as to the legal position of such a clause in so far as it delegated or transferred their powers, functions, and discretions to another body. In 1920, the County Council of Middlesex inserted a clause in their licences to the effect that only films which had been submitted to and passed by the Board must be exhibited in the halls under their jurisdiction."

One of the theatres contravened this Clause, and an action was brought by the authority against the licensee. The case was heard before the Lord Chief Justice and two other Justices. They held that so long as a regulation was reasonable, it might be included in the licence, but they considered the regulation in question was unreasonable having regard to the fact that there was no appeal from the decision of the British Board of Film Censors. Their finding was to the effect that the regulation would be a reasonable and useful condition if made subject to the right of appeal to the Licensing Authority, and that a suitable form of words might read: "provided that no film which has not been passed for general exhibition by the British Board of Film Censors shall be exhibited without the express consent of the Licensing Authority."

This finding, which was only applicable in England and Wales, gave legal right to the Licensing Authorities on the one hand to review any decision of the Board, and on the other to insert in their licences any reasonable conditions respecting the nature of the films to be shown. There has been no similar test-case in the Scottish Law Courts, and the licensing authorities in Scotland do not consider that they are entitled to exercise powers of film censorship.

The difference of administrative responsibility in the neighbouring countries is undoubtedly a serious handicap to securing

improved film standards, and the Enquiry Sub-Committee trust that some means may be found to remove this inequality. It must, however, be remembered that even if powers of film censorship were assured for all the licensing authorities in Scotland as well as in England and Wales, they are of the nature of permissive powers, which may be exercised or not as each licensing authority may determine for their locality, and in such varying degree as they may decide.

The statutory authorities, as already stated, are the County Councils and County Borough Councils, many of which have delegated their licensing powers to local Justices sitting in Petty Sessions, to Watch Committees, or to local borough, urban or rural district Councils.

Thus, in England and Wales, the County Councils number 61, and the County Borough Councils number 83, but the actual number of local licensing authorities is over 700. This figure includes a small proportion of County and County Borough Councils which have not delegated their powers, together with hundreds of local bodies to which powers have been delegated.

At present, the Licensing Authorities only receive from the Board of Film Censors a statement of the names of the films passed and their respective category "A" or "U". If they wish for a synopsis of all or any of the films, they can require the licensees to supply such information and they may request a private view of any film before it is shown publicly. There is, however, usually very little time for this to be done. It was suggested to the Enquiry that the Board of Film Censors should supply brief synopses of the films when sending the list of those passed, so that the Licensing Authorities might have more time to view particular films if desired.

The censorship of film-posters has for some time been under consideration in the Cinema Committee, but it is not included in the present enquiry.

Democratic Character of the Present System.

The right of appeal from the decisions of the British Board of Film Censors is not infrequently used. For example, quite recently the Board refused to pass the film "Her Child," but on appeal to the London and Middlesex County Councils it was passed for exhibition within their areas. However, its pre-release run in London proved a failure, showing that in this case the public supported the opinion of the Board. On the other hand a film "Outward Bound," passed by the Councils in question after being banned by the Censor, proved an instant popular success.

The exercise of this right in effect throws the responsibility upon the public, and if the Censorship were conducted by a statutory body, or under any form of Governmental authority, this right of appeal could not in practice be sustained, while it might be difficult to avoid the intervention of quasi-political influences.

The Sub-Committee are of opinion that the democratic form of control is better suited to the spirit of the British public, and ought to be adequate if the licensing authorities throughout the country would assume the full weight of their own responsibilities and powers, while keeping in closer contact both with one another and with the British Board of Film Censors.

There appears however to be a lack of co-ordination among the licensing authorities, and in some areas no public consciousness of a standard to be maintained in Cinema Exhibitions. Experience has shown various ways of dealing with this—e.g. by increased pressure from the Government Department concerned, through the force of example given by the more progressive local authorities, and above all by public demand in the district, more particularly at the times of local elections.

Regulations and Recommendations of the Home Office.

The Home Office has issued from time to time Official Regulations under the Cinematograph Act, 1909, with regard to the "building" used for Cinematograph exhibitions, the seating, exits, and all the necessary precautions for health, supervision, lighting, safety from fire, etc.

For example, the Regulations dated July 30th, 1923 (Statutory Rules and Orders, 1923, No. 983) which form a 15-page document, *must* be complied with by all licensees.

In 1930, as a result of the widespread feeling aroused by the tragic disaster in a children's performance at the Glen Cinema, Paisely, the following additional Regulations were issued (Statutory Rules and Orders, 1930, No. 361):—

"In order to secure the safety of the audience the licensee or some responsible person nominated by him in writing for the purpose shall be in charge during the whole time of any exhibition and he shall be assisted by a sufficient staff of attendants who shall be specially instructed by the licensee or such responsible person as to their respective duties, in particular in relation to the carrying out of the requirements of these regulations.

Where at any exhibition the majority of the persons attending are under fourteen years of age the number of attendants required by the foregoing paragraph shall be such as to enable them effectively to control the movements of the

children whilst entering or leaving the premises and during the exhibition and to ensure the order and safe clearance of the hall in case of emergency.

All the attendants shall remain on duty during the whole time that the premises are open to the public.

All persons responsible for or employed in or in connection with the exhibition shall take all due precautions for the prevention of accidents and shall abstain from any act whatever which tends to cause fire and is not reasonably necessary for the purpose of the exhibition."

All such Statutory Rules and Orders are part of the law of the land.

Recommendations of Model Conditions in Licences.

The Home Office has also issued Circulars to the Licensing Authorities, containing various recommendations which the Authorities may or may not adopt. These relate to the films displayed and are commonly spoken of as the "Model Conditions" or "Model Rules." They have, however, been largely based on the actual experience of the London County Council and other active Licensing Authorities. In 1917 the following recommendations were issued:—

1. No film shall be shown which is likely to be injurious to morality or to encourage or incite to crime, or to lead to disorder, or to be offensive to public feeling, or which contains any offensive representations of living persons. If the Licensing Authority serve a notice on the licensee that they object to the exhibition of any film on any of the grounds aforesaid, that film shall not be shown.
2. No film shall be shown unless three clear days' notice, stating the name and subject of the film, together with a copy of any synopsis or description used or issued in connection with the film, has been given to the Licensing Authority: and the licensee shall within that period, if the Licensing Authority so require, exhibit the film to such persons as they may direct.
3. Films which have been examined by any persons on behalf of the Licensing Authority shall be exhibited exactly in the form in which they were passed for exhibition, without any alterations or additions unless the consent of the Licensing Authority to such alterations or additions has previously been obtained.
4. No poster, advertisement, sketch, synopsis or programme of a film shall be displayed, sold or supplied either inside or outside the premises which is likely to be injurious to morality, or to encourage or to incite crime,

or to lead to disorder, or to be offensive to public feeling, or which contains offensive representations of living persons.

5. Every part of the premises to which the public are admitted shall be so lighted during the whole of the time it is open to the public as to make it possible to see clearly over the whole area.

In 1923 two additional recommendations were issued:—

6. No film (other than photographs of current events) which has not been passed for "universal" exhibition or "public" exhibition by the British Board of Film Censors shall be exhibited without the express consent of the Council.
7. No film—other than photographs of current events—which has not been passed for universal exhibition by the British Board of Film Censors, shall be exhibited in the premises without the express consent of the Council during the time that any child, under the age of 16 years, is therein. Provided that this condition shall not apply in the case of any child who is accompanied by a parent or bonâ fide adult guardian of such child.

On 16th December, 1929, a further Circular (No. 537, 429/3) was issued under the title "**The Cinema and Children**," in which most of the earlier recommendations were repeated, and certain others added requiring fuller announcement as to the category of the films to be shown.

In reference to No. 7 as above quoted, an explanatory statement was made as follows:—"the principle underlying this condition is that a child or young person should not be allowed to see an "A" film unless the parent or guardian accepts the responsibility of taking the child with him."

In order that they may not do so unwittingly, the Circular of 1929 recommends that:—

"Immediately before the exhibition of each cinematograph film passed by the British Board of Film Censors, a reproduction of the certificate of the Board, or, as an alternative if such certificate is not available, a slide giving the name of the film, stating that the film has been passed by the Board and giving the category ("A" or "U") in which the film has been placed, shall be exposed for at least ten seconds in such a manner that it shall be legible to all persons attending the exhibition."

Further it is recommended that there shall be displayed in the premises of the Cinema Hall a "notice, of dimensions not less

than 36 inch by 26 inch, stating the *titles* of all films to be shown during the programmes, the *time* when each film will be exhibited, and the Category "A" or "U" in which each film has been placed by the British Board of Film Censors.

These recommendations of the Home Office might well be regarded as the minimum standard to be adopted and enforced by every licensing authority in the country.

The Enquiry Sub-Committee endeavoured to find out to what extent they had been adopted, and prepared a Questionnaire which was issued by the National Council of Women to the County Councils and County Borough Councils in England and Wales. The replies showed that of the 83 *County Boroughs*, 34 had adopted the Rules and 34 had not; 15 sent no reply.

In the case of the 61 *County Councils*, 20 had not delegated their powers; 7 had adopted all the Model Rules, and 4 had partly adopted them; 9 gave no reply.

Of the County Councils, 28 had delegated their powers, and only 4 of these stated that the Model Rules had been adopted by the bodies to whom these powers had been delegated. 8 County Councils stated that the Rules had not been adopted; 16 gave no reply.

The Enquiry Sub-Committee notes with satisfaction that the Home Office is now obtaining full information on this point from all the licensing authorities. Meanwhile it was felt that it might help to expedite matters if an urgent appeal to adopt the model conditions were sent to all those who had not replied in the affirmative, and as the London Public Morality Council had dealt with this question at a representative Conference held in January last, this appeal was issued jointly by the two organisations. The Branches of the National Council of Women were also urged to do everything possible in their own localities to push forward the adoption of the "Model Conditions."

It ought to be stated here that in Scotland no similar "Model Rules" have been issued by the Secretary of State for Scotland.

Attendance of Children at "A" Films.

The model condition No. 7 has been applied by a considerable number of the licensing authorities, but they find that notwithstanding children manage to get into the theatre under the wing of older people who are neither parents nor bona fide guardians.

One or two of the licensing authorities have therefore recently forbidden the presence of any children, whether accompanied or unaccompanied, during the exhibition of "A" films. In October, 1930, the Liverpool Licensing Justices made it a condition of

granting the Cinema licence in their area that "A" films should not be exhibited to persons under 16. This condition was contravened by the Burlington Cinema Company, Limited, of Vauxhall Road, Liverpool, by showing a film "Red Pearls" to persons under the age of 16 without having obtained the permission of the Liverpool Justices.

The case was taken to Court and the judgment upheld the action of the Licensing Justices. The Burlington Cinema was fined £10 and the Licensee £2. An appeal against this decision proved unsuccessful.

Referring to this law-case, Sir E. Hesketh Bell, in writing to the "Times" deplored

"the vulgar and sensational pictures that are being presented daily and nightly to millions of our people. . . . Up to recently one was inclined to put all the blame on films of American manufacture, but it is sad to have now to confess that many of our recent British productions are just as bad, from the point of view of morals, as those of foreign origin."

Many people are of opinion that this last statement is justified. The explanation offered is that the American film producers had established a precedent before the British producers started work. Even now about 90% of the films displayed in this country come from America, and in the keen competition, it is scarcely possible for the British producer to hope suddenly to alter the nature of a public demand that has been built up during the past quarter of a century.

The cinema "fans" in this country are educated to American productions: British productions are still on trial. Now is the time therefore when a determined struggle must be made to encourage the better kind of films, whether they are produced here or in any other country, especially as it has been estimated that 75% of the Cinema audiences in the U.S.A. are under 25 years of age, and as the same is probably the case here.

Hence the influence of the film has to be regarded side by side with that of the home, the school, the playground and the sports field as a primary influence in the development of the mind and character of the individual, in fact as part of the training-ground of the British citizens.

In considering the action of the Liverpool Licensing Justices, the Enquiry Sub-Committee, while sympathising with the desire to restrain children from attending "A" films, felt that the only really satisfactory line of advance was to endeavour to keep up the standard of the "A" films themselves. At present the category includes all grades, from the very best to the very

worst films, regarded from the point of view of moral influence; and the films of finest technique and dramatic effects are among them.

The issue will have to be faced by the film-producing firms and renters as to whether they will refrain entirely from films appealing to the baser elements in humanity, so that no "A" film could legitimately call forth objection, or whether they are prepared to run the gauntlet of public opinion which has already in certain areas led to the banning of "A" films for children under 16 years of age, and consequently to the exclusion also of many of the parents.

General Conclusions.

The conclusions of the Enquiry Committee are as follows:—

(1) That the present voluntary system of film censorship is on the whole superior to a statutory system, since it accords better with the democratic principles and traditions to which British people are accustomed.

(2) That closer contact between the Board of Film Censors and public opinion should be secured by the establishment of a Consultative Committee, composed mainly of representatives of the local licensing authorities, and including representatives of the Home Office, the Board of Film Censors and the Board of Trade Film Advisory Committee; such Committee to keep in touch with the trade interests on the one hand, and the general public on the other, and to encourage the maintenance of the better-class standards in films.

(3) That the action of the Liverpool Licensing Authority, in ruling that unless a film has been passed for *universal* exhibition children under 16 shall not be allowed to see it, even if accompanied by a parent or guardian, has established an important precedent, and one which will probably be followed by some of the other licensing bodies. While such stringent action is not likely to be generally adopted, in the opinion of the Committee it is of paramount importance that a minimum standard of licensing conditions should be recognised by all Licensing Authorities throughout the country, a standard not below that indicated by the Model Rules of the Home Office.

(4) That little good can come of any attempt to persuade exhibitors to arrange their ordinary programmes entirely on "A" or "U" certificate lines, owing to trading conditions governing the release and booking of films.

(5) That not only is it essential to protect children from the detrimental influence of many films, but it is equally important to keep in view the unwholesome influence of a number of the "A" films upon young people in the impressionable years of life between 16 and 25; nor can the effect of such films upon older people be disregarded.

The Committee would therefore urge the need to maintain the "A" films at a more uniform standard and so to provide for the whole population a clean Cinema, showing plays with sound dramatic and artistic qualities.

The Committee believe that this can only be achieved by bringing to bear upon film producers and licensing authorities alike the pressure of a strong public opinion. They are confident that if the licensing authorities take initiative as a body to adopt uniform minimum standards, they will have the cordial support of all the leading social organisations and of widespread individual opinion now being voiced throughout the country.

(3) That not only is it essential to protect children from the harmful influence of many films, but it is equally important to keep in view the unwholesome influence of a number of the films upon young people in the impressionable years of life between 15 and 25, and that the effect of such films upon older people is being studied.

The Committee would like to see the law amended to maintain the same standard of quality for all films shown in public places and to provide for the same in the case of films shown in private places.

The Committee believes that the law may be enforced by having the law upon this subject amended and licensing authorities like the Board of Censors of New York City. It is suggested that the licensing authorities be empowered to issue licenses to show motion pictures in public places and to refuse to issue licenses to show motion pictures in private places and to withdraw licenses from individual exhibitors who violate the law.