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taken. He also discussed the suggestion that special films should be made for children. The Russians had been making them, and J. A. Rank was keen on making them in Britain. Good films could be made in New Zealand for that matter, too, against our own New Zealand background.

Surfeit of Films

The third speaker, Walter Harris, complained of his ill-fortune in being last. The previous speakers, of course, had said most of the things he was keen to say. Nevertheless, he stayed his time and a bit more, and made these points:

It's not that films are bad; the trouble is that children go too much. Bananas are good, but if you eat too many. . . . Beer is good, but if you drink too much. . . . and films are good too, but you can also misuse them. Children go too often and they miss their sleep, and even exercise if they go on fine Saturdays too.

As for sex—it is true that most of it goes over their heads. Mostly, they are just bored by love scenes. And as for learning criminal tricks, well, you don't learn how to break the safe by going to the movies. The films children should really be protected from are the ones that adults may find excellent but children will find dull. *Demi Paradise*, for instance, a first-rate film, but boring to a child. Serials? Well, they don't do a great deal of harm. (Mr. Harris had already quoted Sir Samuel Hoare as saying that the best evidence collected for him by Home Office experts showed that the films led more to prevention than to the commission of crime; in fact, they kept children out of mischief).

What Mr. Harris said he would censor were the hoarding and the poster—they were not so much immoral as, well, just vulgar. Alluring females? No, children weren't much interested in them.

As Mr. Mirams had said, recommend, don't ban. Find out the films children would like, and make them known. Two kinds of certificate would suffice for censorship purposes—a "Family" certificate, indicating that the film was the kind parents could take their children to, and a "Horror" certificate, giving a fair warning to those who don't like horror films.

Complain to the Manager

Turning to figures, Mr. Harris quoted an authoritative statement that only nine per cent. of films shown were suitable for children. Taking current advertisements, he found that of 11 cinemas, six were showing A certificate (adults) films, three showing U certificate (Universal exhibition) films, and two, special children's matinees.

Another point taken from the newspaper advertisements was that one suburban theatre had for eight weeks had A certificate films showing on Saturday afternoons. Had anyone thought of having a talk to the manager? Had the school committee gone along and said: "Can't we do better than this?" Had they done anything about the posters outside a certain theatre on a Saturday afternoon: Thrills, Horror, Murder, and the Adults certificate, but "Children, 3d. 3d. 3d." in huge letters?



"... Enters the room with her arms full of parcels"

Mr. Harris spoke approvingly of the Feilding Family Film Club, where parents and children go together, and afterwards they can talk about what they have seen—documentaries, interest films, and the better cartoons. It would be a good idea, he thought, if teachers could go with children sometimes, and talk to them about the films they see. "Perhaps it might even make a dent in their childish faith in what appears in the newspapers."

The community itself could make its own efforts—get on side with the manager of the local theatre, for instance, and always make specific complaints about definite points, not just a general moan.

Views from the Audience

When the last speaker had finished, the chairman called for questions from the floor, and the first to get up was a journalist who had been away in the islands in uniform.

"The exhibitor has no choice," he said. "The Jewish plutocracy of Hollywood dictates! And if there were any choice, are any films good? I'll be provocative and say no! Over-stimulation is bad for any child—I'll go further and say, any organism. We all know how excessive stimulation will distort any young organism, animal or vegetable. I think that any film is bad for a child, with all those concentrated stimuli to his senses, regardless of whether the content of it

is good or bad by adult standards. After a certain age it's all right. But I've been away during the war, and I was Officer Commanding in a place so isolated I doubt if any of you can imagine the isolation. Those men hadn't seen a street, or a cinema, or a woman, for over a year. Now the ones who suffered most—from this sort of nostalgic deterioration, as I might call it—were the ones who had been brought up on the cinema. The older ones, and the men who'd been brought up in the country didn't suffer. Well, it was bad enough with our own men, but it was far worse for some of the Americans, from those very over-stimulated centres of civilisation."

As soon as this speaker sat down, another got up and protested very strongly against his phrase, "the Jewish plutocracy of Hollywood," and asked whether it might not have happened likewise if Nazis had made Hollywood and not Jews. A lot of people happened to have died in the struggle to stop this racial poison, he said, and the phrase should not have been allowed.

The previous speaker said he was quite prepared to omit the word "Jewish" and say "the plutocracy of Hollywood."

Then a teacher spoke. She agreed with the journalist. Members of her profession found it a very serious problem indeed to deal with a child who had been over-stimulated by the film.

A clergyman said it had been a sad shock to him to hear the mercenary tone of Mr. Andrews' speech. Mr. Andrews then explained that when he mentioned the door takings at one theatre he had intended them only as a convenient gauge of the results achieved. And the clergyman went on to add that housing conditions were a big factor. In a family living in a two or three-roomed cottage or flat, homework was impossible, and a child could not possibly read a good book among all the distractions of such a life. It was not surprising then, that children depended a good deal on films.

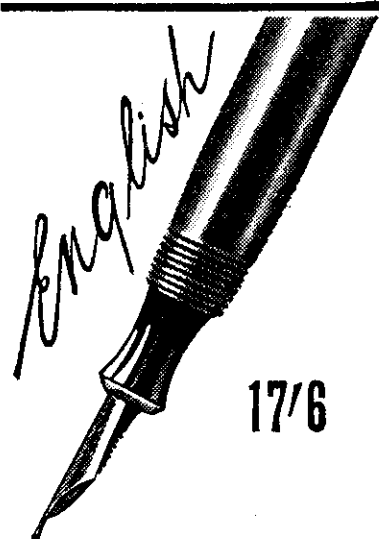
And finally, after some more discussion, the meeting passed a resolution that a committee should be formed to try and find out in advance (with the help of the film industry) what films are suitable for children, and make this knowledge available to parents.

THE ELECTION IN GREAT BRITAIN

THE English Parliament has existed as an institution since the reign of Edward I. At the revolution of 1698 it established its supremacy in the State and from that time on it has been recognised as an essential feature of the constitution. Representation, in the early days, had its sordid side. Elections were fought and won by corrupt methods. Bribery was everywhere practised openly and intimidation was even more common than bribery. Electors dared not vote in opposition to the wishes of their employers, lest they should lose their jobs, or of their landlords, for fear of eviction, or if they were shopkeepers, of their important customers in case business should be transferred elsewhere. There was no secret ballot. Reforms

came eventually, but it was a hard-fought struggle. The franchise was gradually extended until, in 1926, practically every man and woman in the country over 21 years of age received the right to vote.

The development of the franchise and a good deal of what it entails will be explained by Professor F. L. W. Wood, Professor of History at Victoria University College, in talks from 2YA on the evenings of June 26 and July 3. These will be just before the British election on July 5—the first general election for nearly ten years. He will refer to the great changes that have come about, particularly regarding voting and the radio and press. He will be careful to avoid party politics, no doubt, but will give a sketch of the electoral system and what happened on the hustings in the queer old days and in more enlightened recent times.



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