

Moulding Thoughts And Habits of All Nations

THE CINEMA— Tremendous Force In Soviet Russia—But What In New Zealand?

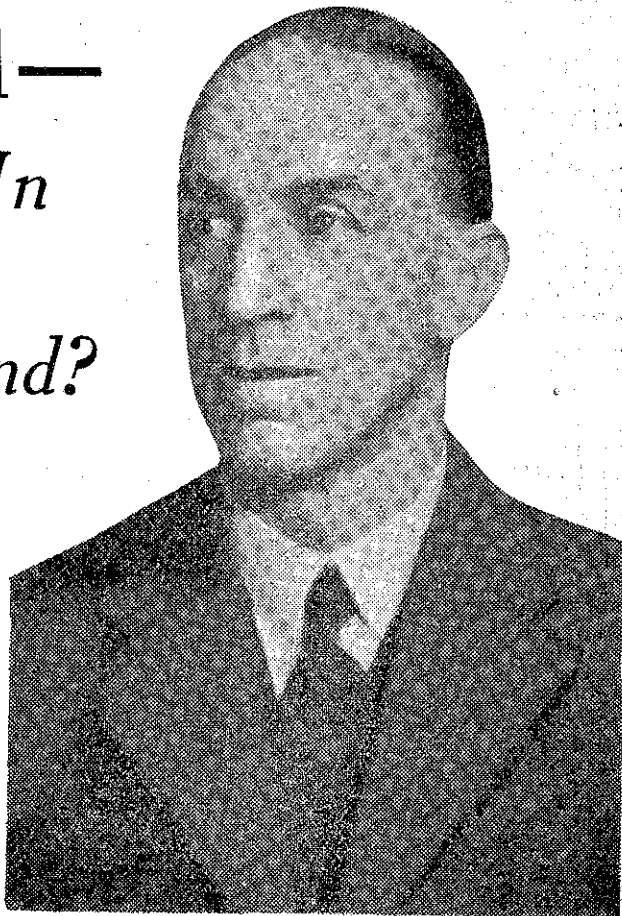
IT has been said more than once that the greatest invention of recent times is the cinema, since more than any other influence has it moulded and directed the thoughts, habits, and outlook of the masses of the peoples of all nations. One would hesitate, perhaps, to support so sweeping a statement; but all must concede the tremendous influence exercised to-day by the moving picture, especially the sound film.

In a broad sense, the cinema exerts an educational influence on people of all ages—children, adolescents, and adults. In this sense it interests and informs, creates new thoughts for the mind, does this more rapidly than any other media, gives greater detail, and induces retention.

Motion pictures, besides being universal educators, may well become factors in international understanding, transcending national barriers and language difficulties, and giving information concerning the lives, traits and character, and the policies of the people of one country to another. World peace must be based on world acquaintance. War must be depicted as something hideous rather than something great and important. Since upon motion pictures far more than upon diplomatists do the peoples of the world now depend for their information concerning the lives and mentality of peoples of other countries, the cinema has come to have incalculable inter-racial implications and responsibilities.

In this country we have so far had little experience of the cinema as a factor for the promotion of social hygiene and health; but one may easily visualise the new opportunities it may open up in the fields of medicine, public health, and physical training. To-day, in some American towns, local health officers use films to instruct the public in sanitation and to supplement health talks and lectures. Medical schools are beginning to use films to instruct students in methods of performing operations, while the biology of human reproduction is explained to adolescents by suitable films.

For many years now the commercial or industrial film has been exploited in all countries with real success as an advertising medium; but little, if anything, has yet been done in New Zealand to utilise the film for instructional purposes in connection with our primary products. A development that is bound to come soon will be the making of films to illustrate and demonstrate all the processes of farming, whether dairy, sheep, or agricultural farming. In spite of all difficulties, farming is, and will remain, the finest occupation for the young New Zealander to follow. It is the occupation upon which the prosperity of our country will continue mainly to depend. But hitherto insufficient facilities have been made available to give either adolescents or adults a real



—S. P. Andrew Photo.

W. A. ARMOUR, headmaster of Wellington College, whose contribution to the "What Next?" series of articles concerns the cinema, its place in modern life and the position it may occupy in the future.

scientific instruction in the many processes connected with farming.

Short winter courses or schools for farmers have proved of some benefit; but what is required is a properly organised scheme of farming instruction embodying all branches, including bee and poultry-keeping, in which the aid of the film will be freely called upon. Of course, the films have first to be made, but we have in New Zealand the equipment and the expert knowledge available to proceed with this great work.

WHAT NEXT?

Outstanding Contributors To Special Series

What next in this rapidly changing world of ours?

This special series of articles, the fourth of which, written by W. A. Armour, is printed here to-day, is creating wide interest. The series will be continued with contributions from the Hon. D. C. Sullivan, Professor James Shelley, the newly-appointed Director of Broadcasting, Dr. Ernest Marsden and Dr. S. Kenneth Phillips.

It is difficult to foretell what use may be made in the future of the cinema for the purpose of national propaganda. We are aware of the tremendous force it has been in Soviet Russia, as an educative force, and as a means used by the rulers of the country to impress upon the masses its ideas, its aims, and even its commands. We know, too, that the cinema as a Government agent has had a powerful directive influence upon the people of Italy and Germany.

When President Roosevelt launched his emergency re-employment campaign as a feature of his National Recovery Administration, a tremendous (Continued on page 58.)