



X/10184/27 Kenya

1) -- Actg Col. Secretary, 3pn. ----- 14.8.27.

Tts. 12 copies of -----

Have copies to library

1 to me  
(11.10.27)

On page 72 of Cmd. 2883, 2nd paragraph, is printed the result of a vote of the question at the C.O. Conference. It was the general opinion of members that censorship exercised with the special object of avoiding the presentation of films unsuitable for native races could only be carried out at the discretion of the authority in each dependency.

In a memo. submitted by the F.B.I. to the Conference (Cmd 2884, page 256, last para) the Federation submitted that Oversea Govts should lay down in as precise terms as possible the principles on which their respective film censors will act. That such statements should be made available for producers in their country so that they may clearly realize the conditions they have to meet.

The main principles of the present report are the provision of



A good report and that they are  
going to be arranged. Some many  
that were calculated for these  
the kind of matter who would be  
most often to the <sup>importance</sup> subject of  
- concerning himself, the

W.S. 15.10

I hope this may be adopted in Africa - but  
it is no solution for older mixed  
communities such as Primitives & the West  
Indies, & I should be quite impracticable  
in the East.

G.P. 15.10.27

As proposed by Parliament

B.H. G.  
Stall

25.10.27

2. To Gov. Conf

2 NOV 1927

Received by  
Ch. G. G. G.

Pages 1, 2, 3, 4  
at 2

A good report on what they say the  
future is also required. It is very  
clear from statistical material that  
the most important factor is the  
most likely to be the <sup>most</sup> important of  
a <sup>number of</sup> ~~number of~~ factors.

Oct 15.10

I hope this may be adopted in Africa - but  
it is no solution for older mixed  
communities such as Transvaal & the West  
Indies, & I should fear quite impracticable  
in the East.

G.S. 15.10.17

As proposed by Parliament

P.H. 6  
at once

25.10.27

2. To Gov. Conf

2 NOV 1927

Received by  
C. H. ...  
at ...

- Mr. Cecil 27/8/27
- Mr. Gant 27/8/27
- Mr. Allan 27/8/27
- Mr. [unclear]
- Sir C. Sprague
- Sir J. Shackburgh
- Sir G. Grenville
- Sir C. Davis
- Sir S. Wilson
- Mr. Ormsby Gore
- Lord Loosdun
- Mr. Amery

D.  
[unclear]

Northey [unclear]

27/8/27  
October 1927

Sir

**DRAFT.**

Receipt  
Conf.  
Gov. Secy

Receipt

... Committee  
... copies  
... which have been received  
under cover of the Acting  
Colonial Secretary's M.O.  
No 8 Pub. 1/1/46 of the  
18<sup>th</sup> of August.

Copy 8 Vol.  
(Caribbean reply)  
The placed on [unclear]  
replies to [unclear]

2. The subject  
of the Committee's report  
is one of great importance  
in all parts of the Empire  
and I would invite

(I have assumed the [unclear]  
would do [unclear] at  
[unclear] address)

Your attention, in this connection,  
<sup>Confidential</sup>  
to an <sup>interim</sup> despatch of the  
10<sup>th</sup> of October, in which I have  
written for information upon  
specified points, covering a wide  
field, with a view to the eventual  
app<sup>l</sup>. of a Committee to consider  
the subject further.

3. I have read the report  
of the Select Committee with  
great interest, and I shall be  
glad to be kept informed of  
any action which is taken to  
implement their recommendations.

I shall also be glad to be  
informed of the views of the other  
East African Gov<sup>ts</sup> on this  
question, in the event of your deciding to  
consult them in accordance  
with the ~~above~~ <sup>select committee's</sup> recommendations  
in paragraph 4 of the report.

Your attention, in this connection,  
<sup>Confidential</sup>  
to my circular despatch of the  
10<sup>th</sup> of October, in which I have  
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specified points, covering a wide  
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app<sup>l</sup>. of a Committee to consider  
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I shall also be glad to be  
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most opinion 20<sup>th</sup> on this  
question, in the event of your deciding to  
consult them in accordance  
with the ~~above~~ <sup>recommendations</sup>  
<sup>Select Committee's</sup>  
opinions of the Report.

15.

WHEN RECEIVING  
PLEASE CHECK  
No. & DATE  
AND DATE

1/1/46.

RECEIVED

8 SEP 1927

COLONY

THE SECRETARIAT,  
NAIROBI,

KENYA.

14<sup>th</sup> August 18th, 1927.

The Acting Colonial Secretary of the Colony and Protectorate of Kenya presents his compliments to the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies and has the honour to transmit twelve copies of the undermentioned papers:-

~~1st Annual Report of the Trade and Information Office.~~

~~Financial Report for 1926.~~

~~Colonial Loan Statement.~~

~~Report of the Select Committee on Film Censorship.~~

~~Report on Wheat Products in Kenya, by Prof. Sir R.H. Biffen.~~

~~Report of the Select Committee on Daylight Saving.~~

*For Gen Secy - 2 NOV 1927*

29th July, 1927.

REPORT OF SELECT COMMITTEE ON  
FILM CENSORSHIP

The Select Committee appointed in the Legislative Council on the 10th of March, 1927, "to consider the whole question of Film Censorship" has the honour to present the following report.

2. The Committee has held six meetings and has heard evidence from nine witnesses. The Committee wishes to place on record an expression of its thanks to the witnesses and of its appreciation of the value of the evidence given before it.

3. The Committee wishes to emphasize its opinion that the proper regulation of films shown in this country is a matter of great importance to the future welfare of the inhabitants and feels therefore that the Government of such a country as Kenya is charged with the duty of ensuring to the best of its ability that the risk of propagation of undesirable influences through the medium of the cinematograph shall be made as small as possible.

4. The problem in Kenya is complicated by factors common to all countries where the inhabitants consist of members of races in different stages of development and the Committee feels that the experience gained in South Africa and elsewhere gives a valuable guide to the attitude which should be adopted on this matter in Kenya.

5. The vast majority of pictures are staged by European and American Promoters for European and American audiences and though the completed picture may be entirely suitable for exhibition to such audiences, it by no means follows that a wrong impression will not be gained by persons

who have no personal acquaintance with the manner of life depicted. Such persons may draw entirely erroneous conclusions from the picture shown and may be unduly influenced by the conclusions so obtained.

6. The colonization of Kenya and the rapid strides made in development in recent years have brought new agencies and circumstances to the notice of the African. To these changes, which to him must be highly bewildering, the African has in many respects made a response nothing short of remarkable, but it cannot therefore, be assumed that he is in a position to understand or to appreciate the European or American environment depicted in films, nor is it likely in the opinion of the Committee that the African in general will, in any period of time that need now be taken into consideration, be sufficiently conversant with that environment so that the reins of control to be relaxed.

7. In this connection the Committee wishes to observe that it seems fundamentally illogical to regard the African in this matter as on a par with European children, or vice versa. In the Committee's view the fact that a European child must be presumed to be able to some extent to understand the scene of a European or American film makes it possible for him to attend the exhibition of such films often not readily intelligible to an African.

8. The Committee would here add its opinion that the admission of European children to picture theatres should not in Kenya be the subject of special regulation. The Committee holds that the presence of European children in picture theatres must be left in this country entirely to the parents, who are responsible for the upbringing of the children and who are therefore in the best position to judge of the fitness of a film for exhibition to their children and of the effect produced on them thereby. The position in Kenya differs

in this regard from that obtaining in countries such as England, where there are many picture theatres and where children, who are allowed a good deal of liberty, can walk into a picture theatre at any time possibly without the knowledge of their parents.

9. Bearing in mind then the duty which the Committee considers to be incumbent on the State, to exercise control over extraneous influences which may affect the welfare of the African population in Kenya, the Committee recommends that a clear division should be instituted between the presentation of films to Africans and to members of other races. The Committee recommends that Africans should have separate picture halls set aside for their use, halls to which members of other races should not be allowed admittance except on special occasions, on special grounds and that the films to be shown in these halls should be subject to a special form of censorship. Similarly, in respect of travelling picture shows which it may be proposed to exhibit to both Africans and non-Africans, the Committee is of opinion that no films should be shown to Africans in travelling booths or elsewhere unless such films have been specially censored for exhibition to Africans and unless the performance to which Africans are admitted has been expressly reserved for Africans only.

10. The Committee wishes to add that evidence given before it indicates that Africans have as yet shown little inclination to become picture-goers, at any rate in up-country picture halls, nor do they seem to enjoy that form of drama which is so common a feature of the cinematograph of the present day. The present time is therefore opportune for defining a policy and providing separate places of entertainment for them. Vested interests will not be affected adversely

to an appreciable extent and the African, if he ever becomes a picture-goer, will by that time have become accustomed to the idea of picture halls reserved for Africans only. The Committee is aware that the position is somewhat different at Mombasa but considers that the recommendations contained in this report should be made to apply equally to Mombasa and other Coast towns.

11. The Committee is of opinion:-

- (a) That the kind of film to be shown in an African picture hall should be so selected as to avoid risk of misrepresentation and should, in the first instance at any rate, be confined to such subjects as are of educational value, farcical, comic, events of world interest, and so on;
- (b) That the films or any matter shown on a screen in African picture halls should be censored by a Board of Censors consisting of one representative each of the Native Affairs Department, the Education Department, the Police, and the Missionary Societies.

12. The Committee regards it as a matter of importance that a uniform policy should be adopted throughout Eastern Africa in regard to the presentation of films to Africans and recommends that the Governments of other East African Territories should be approached with a view to concerted action being taken.

13. The Committee also wishes to observe that it regards control and censorship of pictorial posters as a

-matter-

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matter of great importance. Evidence has been given before it of the harm which may be done by the indiscriminate exhibition of pictorial posters. It is the same that the Committee has been informed that such posters form a valuable medium of advertising and are regarded as necessary by the trade generally. The Committee does not wish, by making a definite recommendation that pictorial posters should be prohibited by law, adversely to affect the interests of the managers of theatres, but the Committee considers that the matter deserves the most serious attention. It recommends that a law should be introduced providing that a pictorial poster may be exhibited until it has been censored by the Resident Commissioner of the District in which it is proposed to exhibit the poster, who would judge whether the poster was suitable for public exhibition. Picture-hall managers, the Committee believes, will be prepared to co-operate whole-heartedly.

14. The remainder of the problem presents little difficulty. The Committee sees no reason at the present stage for recommending that any differentiation should be made in respect of censorship of films as between members of non-African races resident in Kenya.

15. The Committee has had under consideration the question of censorship of films intended for exhibition to non-Africans and, having taken evidence on the subject, recommends that films bearing the mark of the Censor or Board of Censors of England, South Africa, or Norway should be

accepted in Kenya without further censorship, on the understanding that the censorship certificate is in all cases exhibited on the screen before the picture is shown. For other films, whose number will of necessity be small, the Committee recommends the appointment of a single censor with the right of appeal to a Board of Censors.

16. The establishment of picture halls for the exclusive use of Africans, except on special occasions, implies conversely that picture halls intended for the exhibition of pictures to Non-Africans should be closed to Africans except, similarly, on special occasions as for instance the presentation of a film by special arrangement to members of the King's African Rifles or Police Force.

17. The Committee has considered whether it would be advisable to recommend an alteration in the law so as to prohibit the importation of certain named classes of films, as is done in South Africa. The Committee is of the opinion that such a law would serve little useful purpose at the present time and that it would necessitate a censorship of all films entering Kenya. In the case of films which have to undergo local censorship before exhibition to Non-Africans, the Committee considers it preferable to leave such questions to the discretion of the local Censor.

- Committee
- as follows:
- Para. 9. (1) There should be separate picture halls for Africans.
  - Para. 11. (2) Non-Africans should not ordinarily be admitted to African picture halls and vice versa.
  - Para. 11. (3) Films for exhibition to Africans should be censored by a Board of Censors, consisting of one representative each of the Native Affairs Department, Education Department, the Police and the Missionary Societies.
  - Para. 11. (4) The kind of film censored for exhibition to Africans should be selected as to avoid risk of misrepresentation.
  - Para. 9. (5) Travelling picture booths should not admit Africans and Non-Africans to the same performance. Travelling picture shows exhibited to Africans in such booths or elsewhere should nevertheless be censored for exhibition to Africans and should be shown at performances reserved for Africans only.
  - Para. 13. (6) No pictorial poster should be exhibited until it has been censored by the District or Resident Commissioner of the District in which it is proposed to exhibit the poster.
  - Para. 12. (7) Efforts should be made to secure a uniform policy in respect of film censorship throughout East Africa.
  - Para. 10. (8) Films bearing the mark of the Censor or Board of Censors of England, South Africa or Bombay should be accepted in Kenya for exhibition to Non-Africans without further censorship.
  - Para. 15. (9) Other films should be censored before exhibition to Non-Africans by a single censor. There should be a right of appeal to a Board of Censors.
  - Para. 8. (10) The attendance of Non-African children at picture theatres in Kenya should be regulated by the parents and not by the State.

(sgd) G. F. MAXWELL,  
 Chief Native Commissioner, ) CA. I.F.M.A.,  
 (sgd) T. FITZGERALD,  
 (sgd) H. L. SCHWARTZ.

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I agree with the above report subject to the following reservations:-

- (1) I consider that the censoring authority for African films should be a special division of the Censor Board.
- (2) I consider that the responsibility for exercising judgment in censoring films for Non-Africans should lie in Kenya.

(sgd) E. VAUGHAN KEENE.

Nairobi,  
29th July, 1927.

Captain the Hon. H.F. Ward, who read the draft of the above report before his departure from the Colony, wished a note to be added to the effect that other Government Committees prevented him attending more than one meeting of the Film Censorship Committee and that he does not therefore feel that he is in a position to express an opinion or to sign the report.

G.R. SANDFORD,  
CLERK OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

NAIROBI,  
29th July, 1927.