

STATISTICAL AND SOCIAL INQUIRY SOCIETY OF IRELAND.

CINEMA STATISTICS IN SAORSTÁT EIREANN.

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So many and various matters, unimportant as well as important, have been the subject of statistical investigation that it is the more surprising to find that the Cinéma industry has so far escaped examination.

The many new buildings erected in recent years in our main thoroughfares, the large capital investments which these undertakings represent and the employment which they provide, the long queues patiently waiting for admittance, the sum paid for admission and the share which the Exchequer collects by way of Entertainments Tax, the enormous amount of space devoted to Cinéma advertisements, both in our newspapers and on the hoardings—all these things must arouse the curiosity of even the most casual observer, while to the statistically minded they demand investigation.

For some time the idea of undertaking a preliminary survey of the Cinemas in the Saorstát had kept recurring to me, but it was not until last December that I was finally stimulated to action by Mr Rowson's most valuable paper entitled "A Statistical Survey of the Cinéma Industry of Great Britain in 1934," read before the Royal Statistical Society. I should like to acknowledge my indebtedness to this paper for several lines of approach which might never otherwise have occurred to me and also for certain figures relating to Cinemas in England, Scotland and Wales, which have provided interesting and illuminating comparisons.

In the near future I believe that Cinemas will be the subject of periodic official investigations in all countries. So far as I am aware, Canada is the first country to recognise the necessity, and the very excellent "Motion Picture Statistics" produced by the Canadian Bureau of Statistics, as a part of the Census of Merchandising and Service Establishments, is a model which shows what can be done in this direction.

So far as the Saorstát is concerned, there are no officially published statistics of the industry, while any statistical information (which I believe to be very inadequate) in the hands of the Associations connected with the industry is a jealously guarded secret. Cinéma exhibitors particularly are loath to disclose their business. The interests of the large and small houses are often dissimilar if not actually conflicting, while between houses of a like size and situation there appears to exist an almost aggressive competitiveness, and signs of co-operation are noticeably lacking. My original hope of circulating a questionnaire to exhibitors and renters through their respective Associations was quickly dispelled, and having been assured that such would meet with no response I was obliged to seek more indirect methods of approach. I am happy to say that I received great assistance and encouragement from a small number of individual renters and exhibitors and other persons connected with

the industry, whose attitude towards statistical investigation was more enlightened than that of some of their associates. I shall feel that I have succeeded if I can provoke the sceptics even so far as to argue any of the statements which are made in this paper.

The last thirty years have seen the Cinema rise from a little-known new invention to one of the greatest social institutions the world has ever known. I have made no attempt to trace this rise in the Saorstát from the early days when the pioneers—the Lyceum, the Sackville, the Dorset (now the Plaza) and the Electric—opened their doors about 1911 and 1912, but have dealt almost exclusively with the position to-day and as it existed in recent years. I had hoped to deal with the employment and wages in the Cinemas and with many other matters concerned with the industry, but the time at my disposal has not permitted.

Owing to the increased rates of Entertainments Duty in August, 1935, and the absence of any reliable data on which to base estimates since that date, it must be borne in mind that the figures for average price of admission and average amount of tax included in admission prices refer to the position in the financial year 1934-35.

Number of Cinemas and their Seating Capacities

There is no authoritative list of the Cinemas in Saorstát Éireann classified according to their location or seating capacities. *The Kinematograph Year Book* and the *Cinema Buyers' Guide*, however, contain fairly comprehensive lists of the names and addresses of Cinemas in the Saorstát, and in some cases of their seating capacities, while there are also available several partial lists compiled for various purposes. From a combination of these lists it was possible to produce a reasonably complete one, which was submitted, for checking of seating capacities, to the principal companies supplying sound reproduction equipment. An acoustic survey (which includes particulars of seating accommodation) is always made prior to the installation of sound equipment, and I am deeply indebted to the companies concerned for the assistance they have given me from their records.

The final list evolved is believed to be substantially accurate, particularly in so far as it concerns the numbers of Cinemas and their seating capacities in cities and towns which exceed 4,000 in population. Particulars were obtainable for 106 out of the 110 houses concerned, in nearly all cases from at least two sources, and the capacities of the remaining 4 houses have been estimated at the average seating capacity of houses situated in towns with populations of corresponding size. There is a tendency on the part of owners to use round numbers in stating the seating capacities of their theatres, but the extent of the error arising from this cause is insignificant.

Some doubt existed in my mind as to the inclusion or exclusion of the several large Ciné-Variety houses in Dublin which were generally exempt from Entertainments Tax (see page 94). These theatres (2 houses with an aggregate seating capacity of approximately 4,600) are not included in the following tables, because the Cinema side of their programmes is a recent development and also because there is no means of estimating the attendances thereat. They are undoubtedly of importance at the present time, but this was not the case in 1934-35, the period to which most of the material in this paper refers.

In towns with population of less than 4,000, Cinemas are a mushroom growth, springing up overnight and often disappearing as suddenly. Sometimes they are only open during certain periods of the year, and

as a rule they are only open on certain days of the week. Of these smaller Cinemas I was able to ascertain the seating capacities of 60, and an estimate for the remaining 20 has been based on this sample. As practically all of the houses for which information is not available are situated in towns or villages of less than 2,000 population, their seating capacities would in very few instances exceed 500. My estimate distributes 17 to the group not exceeding 500 seats and 3 to the group 501-750 seats.

The following tables summarise the results obtained. All houses which were open for any considerable period in 1935 are included, even though in some cases there were only three or four performances each week.

TABLE 1.—NUMBER OF CINEMAS, SEATING CAPACITY, AVERAGE NUMBER OF SEATS PER CINEMA IN 1935 AND NUMBER OF THE POPULATION PER SEAT.

	Number of Cinemas	Number of Seats	Average Number of Seats per Cinema	Population (1926) per Seat
1. County Borough of Dublin, the Borough of Dun Laoghaire and the Urban District of Howth	36	32,723	909	14.3*
2. Cork, Limerick and Waterford	19	15,322	806	9.4
3. Towns with population of 10,000—15,000	18	11,923	662	7.1
4. Towns with population of 5,000—10,000	22	12,635	574	6.9
5. Towns with population of 4,000—5,000	15	6,650	443	7.0
Total of above ...	110	79,253	720	10.5
6. Rest of Saorstát Éireann ..	80	32,185	402	—
1-6. TOTAL, SAORSTÁT ÉIREANN	190	111,438	586	27.2*

* Based on estimated population in 1935.

From the above Table it will be seen that there were 190 Cinemas in Saorstát Éireann in 1935, with 111,438 seats, that is, there was one Cinema for every 16,000 of the population, and one Cinema seat for every 27 persons. Of the 190 Cinemas about 165 (with 100,000 seats) had performances on at least five days each week, the remaining 25 were, as a rule, only open on two, three or four days.

The figures in the final column must be interpreted with reservations as they are based on the actual population of the towns concerned and do not take any account of the surrounding rural districts, which undoubtedly supply a large proportion of the patronage of small town Cinemas. The population of Dublin, with its surrounding suburban areas, constitutes about 15% of the total population of the Saorstát, but accounts for approximately 30% of the Cinema seating capacity. Owing to the proximity of Dun Laoghaire and Howth to Dublin, I have

included them with the County Borough of Dublin, rather than with towns of corresponding size. The smaller size of Cinemas with decreasing size of towns will be noted, the average seating capacity of Dublin Cinemas being greater than those of Cork, Limerick and Waterford and over double those in small towns of 4,000-5,000 population.

The following Table shows the number of Cinemas classified according to seating capacity.

TABLE 2.—NUMBER OF CINEMAS, AGGREGATE NUMBER OF SEATS AND PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF SEATS CLASSIFIED BY SEATING CAPACITY OF CINEMAS.

	SEATING CAPACITY OF CINEMAS				TOTAL
	Not exceeding 500 seats	501-750 seats	751-1,000 seats	Over 1,000 seats	
	Number of Cinemas				
1. County Borough of Dublin, the Borough of Dun Laoghaire and the Urban District of Howth	5	10	9	12	36
2-5. Other Cities and Towns with pop. over 4,000	35	21	12	6	74
6. Rest of Saorstát Éireann	68	12	—	—	80
1-6 TOTAL, SAORSTÁT ÉIREANN	108	43	21	18	190
	Aggregate Number of Seats.				
1. County Borough of Dublin, the Borough of Dun Laoghaire and the Urban District of Howth	1,949	6,132	7,647	16,995	32,723
2-5. Other Cities and Towns with pop. over 4,000	14,248	13,424	10,233	8,625	46,530
6. Rest of Saorstát Éireann	24,580	7,605	—	—	32,185
1-6 TOTAL, SAORSTÁT ÉIREANN	40,777	27,161	17,880	25,620	111,438
	Percentage Distribution of Seats.				
1. County Borough of Dublin, the Borough of Dun Laoghaire and the Urban District of Howth	6.0	18.7	23.4	51.9	100.0
2-5. Other Cities and Towns with pop. over 4,000	30.6	28.9	22.0	18.5	100.0
6. Rest of Saorstát Éireann	76.4	23.6	—	—	100.0
1-6 TOTAL, SAORSTÁT ÉIREANN	36.6	24.4	16.0	23.0	100.0

Of the 12 Cinemas with over 1,000 seats in Dublin, 6 are between 1,000 and 1,250, 4 between 1,250 and 1,500 and 2 over 1,500. Their aggregate number of seats was 6,617, 5,659 and 4,719, representing respectively 20.2%, 17.3% and 14.4% of the total seating capacity in Dublin Cinemas.

The contrast in the percentage distribution of the seating capacity is very marked. Over half the seating accommodation in Dublin Cinemas is in houses of over 1,000 seats (the corresponding percentage for Cork being approximately the same), while only 6% is provided by Cinemas of not more than 500 seats. At the other extreme are the Cinemas situated in towns of less than 4,000 population which have three-quarters of their seating capacity in houses accommodating 500 or less.

The following Table shows striking contrasts with England, Scotland, Wales and Switzerland.

TABLE 3—NUMBER OF CINEMAS IN ENGLAND, SCOTLAND, WALES AND SWITZERLAND AND SAORSTÁT ÉIREANN CLASSIFIED ACCORDING TO SEATING CAPACITY.

Countries	NUMBER OF CINEMAS OF EACH SIZE					
	Not exceeding 500 seats		501-1,000 seats		Over 1,000 seats.	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
England	742	21.4	1,733	50.1	987	28.5
Scotland	73	14.0	262	50.2	187	35.8
Wales	86	26.8	189	58.9	46	14.3
Saorstát Éireann.	108	56.8	64	33.7	18	9.5
Switzerland	248	77.0	55	17.1	19	5.9

The very high proportion of small Cinemas in the Saorstát is emphasised by the comparison with England, Scotland and Wales, though not with Switzerland where, in 77% of the Cinemas, the seating capacity does not exceed 500. The aggregate seating capacities by size of Cinema are not available for each of these countries separately, but in the whole of Great Britain 9.6%, 42.8% and 47.6% of the aggregate number of seats were in houses not exceeding 500, 501-1,000 and over 1,000 seats respectively, compared with corresponding percentages of 36.6, 40.4 and 23.0 for the Saorstát.

The most precise comparison between the Cinema facilities which are available in different countries and cities is provided by the actual seating capacities of Cinemas. The following Table gives such comparisons in so far as I have been able to obtain statistics from reliable sources.

TABLE 4.—NUMBER OF CINEMA SEATS, AVERAGE NUMBER OF SEATS PER CINEMA AND POPULATION PER CINEMA SEAT IN CERTAIN COUNTRIES AND CITIES IN 1934.

	Number of Cinema Seats	Average Number of Seats per Cinema	Number of Population per Cinema Seat
	Thousand		
COUNTRIES :			
Scotland	511	979	9
Wales	243	757	11
England	3,118	901	12
Canada	488	611	22
Saorstát Éireann¹	111	586	27
Switzerland ²	125	387	33
Poland	250	355	134
Yugoslavia ²	90	282	155
CITIES :			
Toronto	73	817	9
Vancouver	24	937	10
Winnipeg	22	858	10
Liverpool ³	72	1,043	12
Dublin ¹	33	909	14
London (Postal Area)	462	1,152	14
Montreal	61	1,082	14
Basle ²	10	679	15
Prague	56	543	15
Geneva ²	9	547	16
Zurich ²	13	637	23
Munich ²	29	403	25
The Hague ¹	16	683	29
Nurnberg ²	13	495	32
Warsaw	35	578	34

¹ 1935² 1933.³ 1931.

Several points of interest are brought out in this Table ; in the first place the wide differences in the average seating capacities of Cinemas in different countries and cities, and in the second place the extraordinary variation between the numbers of persons per seat, for instance, 9 persons per seat in Scotland as compared with 27 persons in the Saorstát, 9 persons in Toronto, compared with 14 in Dublin, London and Montreal, and 34 in Warsaw.

Statistics of the numbers of Cinemas are available for a larger number of countries and cities, and while these do not furnish such good comparisons as the figures for seating capacities, they give at least some indication of the relative position held by the Cinema.

It must be borne in mind that it is quite possible for a country or a city to be better served (from the point of view of the Cinema-going population) by a large number of small Cinemas than by a lesser number of large Cinemas with a greater aggregate seating capacity.

The following Table shows the number of Cinemas and the number of the population per Cinema in certain countries and cities.

TABLE 5 —NUMBER OF CINEMAS AND POPULATION PER CINEMA.

Countries	Number of Cinemas	Population per Cinema	Cities	Number of Cinemas	Population per Cinema
		Thous.			Thous.
Sweden	1,190	5 2	Stockholm . .	97	5 4
United States,			Toronto	89	7 1
America	22,731	5 5	Prague	103	8 2
Czechoslovakia	1,987	7 6	Winnipeg	26	8 4
Spain	3,100	7 8	Helsingfors	30	8 9
Belgium	1,031	8 0	Geneva	16	8 9
Wales	321	8 1	Brussels	96	9 3
Austria	745	9 1	Vancouver	26	9 5
Scotland	522	9 3	Basle	15	9 9
England	3,462	10 9	Riga . . .	38	9 9
Norway	245	11 7	Munich .	72	10 2
Finland	300	11 8	Vienna	178	10 5
Germany	5,360	12 2	Paris	261	11 1
Switzerland	322	12 9	Liverpool . . .	69	12 4
France	3,113	13 5	Dublin	36	13 0
Canada	799	13 6			
			Montreal	56	14 6
Saorstát Eireann . . .	190	16 0	Zurich	21	14 9
Hungary	524	17 0	Nurnberg	26	15 8
Italy	2,283	18 7	London (Postal		
Greece	350	18 9	Area) . .	401	15 9
Netherlands	215	39 0	The Hague .	24	19 5
Yugoslavia	319	43 7	Warsaw	60	19 7
Japan	1,485	45 9	Amsterdam .	28	27 8
Poland . .	705	47 4			
Lithuania	45	54 9			
Roumania . .	279	66 9			

The figures in Table 5 may not be strictly comparable in all cases. For one thing they do not refer to the same year, and while they have all been extracted from recent publications, the actual dates to which they relate are not always stated. In the second place what may be accounted a Cinema in one country or city may not be so described elsewhere. I refer especially to school buildings and other educational centres equipped with cinematograph apparatus and to halls used only for itinerant shows, or used partly as Cinemas and partly for Variety, Concerts, etc. The statistics for some countries (Great Britain amongst them), only include Cinemas open on at least six days per week, while most continental countries appear to include all Cinemas, no matter how few performances are held. Making allowance for any differences of classification, it is still apparent that the number of Cinemas in the Saorstát compared with those in other countries, or in Dublin, as compared with other cities, is in no way outstanding. For instance, while there is one Cinema per 5,500 persons in the United States, or per 10,900 in England, there is only one per 16,000 persons in this country.

The hours during which Cinemas are open vary widely, and I have so far only been able to make a very cursory examination of the facts. In Dublin the hours per week vary generally between 36 and 54, in the small towns there is seldom more than one show per night and an occasional *matinée*. The length of programme and the frequency of changes

of programme are also matters on which there is extreme difficulty in obtaining information of a reliable nature.

It would be most interesting to have a record of the hours per week during which all Cinemas were open, and of the number of complete programmes shown. If this information were available, it would be possible to calculate the total number of persons which the available seats in any area could accommodate. Information on this matter is quite incomplete, but assuming for all classes of houses an average of 20 performances each week in Cinemas in Dublin, 16 in Cinemas in Cork, Limerick and Waterford, 12 in Cinemas in towns with population of over 10,000, 9 in towns of 5,000-10,000, 7 in towns 4,000-5,000 and 6 in the remainder, and weighting the corresponding seating capacities accordingly, there would be available, approximately, 73 million seats per annum, which would permit of every person in the Saorstát attending a Cinema 24 times in the year, or of every person aged 15 years and over attending 34 times. This figure must not, however, be regarded as more than a carefully considered estimate, which I hope to have an opportunity of confirming or amending at some future date. It is based on information available for a sample of Cinemas, confirmed in some cases by opinions expressed to me by certain proprietors. In measuring the Cinema facilities in relation to the population some such system of weighting should be adopted in order to arrive at a figure for the number of the population per seat per "show" in Cinemas in different areas, which would be the most precise measure of Cinema facilities.

Later in this paper I attempt to disprove the oft-repeated assertion that the Irish, especially in Dublin, are the greatest Cinema-going public in the world. At this stage I would merely stress the fact that the existing Cinema accommodation is not excessive. The small Cinemas still predominate, though in Dublin there is a definite movement in the direction of larger houses. This movement is unlikely to spread beyond the principal cities owing to the sparsely populated rural areas and the often inadequate transport services. The difficulties with which the small houses have had to contend in recent years have told heavily against them and signs of prosperity are noticeably lacking. The introduction of sound in 1929 and 1930 required considerable capital expenditure on equipment, while the keen competition of the large new houses, both as regards variety of programme and the provision of more comfortable surroundings, together with the increased burden of Entertainments Tax, have all told heavily on the small Cinema.

If the growth of large Cinemas is maintained at the present rate in Dublin over the next few years, and if other conditions remain unchanged, I venture to predict the early demise of a number of the small houses which have become old friends in our city. Many, I believe, would share with me regrets at the passing of some of the small and pleasant houses, which have so often in the past entertained us with programmes of taste and distinction, rather than attempting to lull our critical faculties to sleep in an atmosphere redolent of the life we have come to associate with Hollywood.

Entertainments Duty Applicable to Cinema Entertainments

The estimates of the number of admissions to Cinemas are based on the receipts from Entertainments Duty, and unfortunately it is necessary to sacrifice continuity and to treat in the first place of the application and incidence of the Duty.

The following Table gives an account of the many changes which have been made in the rates of Entertainments Duty since its introduction. There is no reference to the rates on any price of admission which exceeds 3s. (excluding duty) as such prices would be the exception in respect of entertainments which come within the scope of this paper

TABLE 6—RATES OF ENTERTAINMENTS DUTY APPLICABLE TO CINEMA ENTERTAINMENTS IMPOSED BY FINANCE (NEW DUTIES) ACT, 1916, AND SUBSEQUENT CHANGES.

Payment for admission, excluding duty	Finance (New Duties) Act, 1916 15th May	Dates on which amended rates of duty came into operation							
		1st Oct 1917	1st Aug 1918	1st Oct 1919	17th July 1928	1st Oct 1931	1st Oct 1932	1st Aug 1935	1st July 1936
		Rates of duty (in pence)							
(in pence)									
1-2	½				Exempt				
2½	1		½		"				
3-4	1				"				
4½	1	2		1½					
5-5½	1	2				1½			
6	1	2					1½		
6½	2	3	2				1½	2	1½
7	2	3	2						
8	2	3				2		3½	3
8½	2	3						3½	3
9	2	3						4½	3
9½-11½	2	3						4½	
12	2	3						6	
13	2	4				3	4	6	
14-18	2	4						6	
19-20	2	4						9	
21-22	2	4					6	9	
23-24	2	4					6	13½	
25-26	2	6				4	9	13½	
27-30	2	6					9	13½	
31-35	3	6					9	13½	
36	3	6					9	18	

The rates shown in the several columns above remained in operation until superseded by the revised rates as given in the succeeding columns. The increased rates which came into operation in August, 1935, and the reductions in 1936 refer to Cinema entertainments only, other rates were in respect of all classes of entertainment which came within the scope of the duties, with the exception of the duty on the 6d. admission to outdoor games, which by a special concession in October, 1932, was fixed at 1d.

The duties imposed in 1916 were largely increased in the following year in respect of all payments for admission which exceeded 4d., the duty being trebled on admission prices between 2s. and 2s. 6d. In 1918 and 1919 some slight modifications were made in the duties on some of the lower prices of admission, and in 1928 it was provided that Entertainments Duty should not be chargeable on payments for admission to an entertainment which did not exceed 4d. (excluding duty). In Great Britain Entertainments Duty was paid on all tickets exceeding 2d. up to 1st July, 1935, when the tax on all admission prices which did not exceed 6d (excluding duty) was remitted.

Further slight reductions were made in Saorstát Éireann on certain of the lower rates in 1931 and 1932, but those on higher priced tickets remained virtually unaltered from 1917 to 1932, when there was, as from 1st October, an increase, roughly, of 50 per cent. in the rates applicable to admissions exceeding 1s. 8d. (excluding duty). There was no further change until the generally increased rates (on all but the lowest-priced tickets) came into operation on 1st August, 1935. The Minister for Finance in his Financial Statement of 15th May, 1935, introducing the increased rates, said: "The enormous numbers who flock, week after week, to the Cinemas have become a matter of public comment. I am sure that it will not be suggested that it is due to any narrow view of mine in this regard that I propose to increase the Entertainments Tax on all Cinema seats above 6d. by approximately 50%."

Entertainments Tax, prior to this increase, amounted to approximately 20% of the gross box office receipts of Cinemas. The increased taxation raised this to nearly 30% of gross receipts. The figures quoted by the Minister for Finance in his Budget speech of 12th May, 1936, showed that the net receipts from Entertainments Duty in the year 1935-36 were almost £50,000 greater than in the preceding year though they fell short of the estimated receipts by about £5,000.

Referring to the increased rates of Entertainments Tax on admissions to Cinemas the Minister said: "The results were not satisfactory either from the viewpoint of the Cinema proprietors or the Exchequer. There was, indeed, a very considerable falling off in the attendances during the first two months that the new scale was in operation. There was some recovery during the remainder of the year, but, in general, the recovery has not been complete, so that this form of entertainment has been hit harder than was intended. Moreover, the adverse effect was much greater in the case of working-class Cinemas, where the top inclusive price is 1s. or less.

"Such houses were severely affected by the fact that under the new scale an inclusive price of 8d. could not be charged, and it may be added that in the existing peculiar circumstances of their case a 3½d. tax in respect of an inclusive price of 1s. is excessive. These considerations suggest the restoration of an 8d. inclusive price with a duty charge of 1½d. and the reduction of the duty charge in the case of the 1s. inclusive price from 3½d. to 3d."

The situation recently created in the province of Ontario, Canada, where about a third of the Cinemas in the Dominion are situated, by the increase in Entertainments Duty is interesting.

* "During the first five months of the year (1935) theatre receipts took a substantial swing to the good when of a sudden the film trade struck a snag in the Province of Ontario, which had the effect of sending aggregate returns into the red column once more. This retarding influence was the decision of the Ontario Government to impose drastic increases in the Amusements Tax, effective June 1st, when the revenue of theatres in that province immediately encountered a slump. The heavy levy continued for six months, until the Provincial Government realised the damaging nature of the new impost. When the outcry of the theatres continued, the Government of Ontario finally announced amended ticket tax rates for the low-priced admissions to be effective

* *Kinematograph Year Book*, 1936.

December 2nd By these revisions, the tax on admissions of 15 cents and under was cut from 2 cents to 1 cent, on admissions of not more than 25 cents, from 5 cents to 2 cents, and on 35 cents and under the impost was reduced from 5 cents to 3 cents "

The rates of Entertainments Tax in operation in various countries vary widely In Sweden it comes to about 12% of admission prices. in Poland taxes amount to 40% of box-office receipts on average films and 20% on films of artistic merit, plus payments for hospital and other funds, domestic films are privileged and only pay 5% to 10% of box office receipts in Entertainments Duty. In Hungary, Entertainments Tax is levied by the Municipalities and amounts to 6% in Budapest (reduced to 3% in the Summer months) and varies from 5% to 15% in the provinces, a turn-over tax of 3% is also levied In Italy, Entertainments Tax amounts to 10% on low-priced admissions and 20% on those at higher prices In Germany it amounts to 9-11% of the gross receipts, in France to about 20% (including special poor rate) and in the Netherlands to 20% In New Zealand Amusements Tax amounts to 3d on tickets from 1s. 6d. to 2s. and to 4d. on tickets from 2s to 3s In Great Britain prior to the remittance in 1935 of the tax on the lower-priced seats, Entertainments Tax amounted to about 16½% of the gross receipts Entertainments Tax in Czechoslovakia amounts to 20% on tickets costing up to 5 crowns (10d) rising to 40% on tickets costing 15 to 20 crowns and 50% on those exceeding 20 crowns. In Austria it varies between 4% and 20% of gross receipts according to the class of theatre, but there are additional Federal and Municipal taxes

For the above information as to Entertainments Tax, I am indebted in certain cases to the representatives in Dublin of the countries mentioned and in other cases to the notes published in the *Kinematograph Year Book* which are contributed by correspondents in various European capitals.

Entertainments Duty is payable in the Særstát by Government stamped tickets and by adhesive stamps Stamped tickets may be purchased from the Collectors of Customs and Excise at Dublin, Cork, Limerick, Waterford and Galway, whilst the adhesive stamps can be obtained only from the Collector at Dublin and from about 140 Post Offices throughout the country Standing arrangements for payment of duty on the basis of certified returns at places of regular entertainment are also permitted. The applicant is required to furnish security by bond, and formal authority is given to dispense with the use of stamped tickets, which authority must be prominently exhibited at each public entrance to the entertainment. Proprietors of "certified" houses are required to furnish regular weekly returns. If we had available the actual number of stamped tickets and of adhesive stamps of each denomination sold to Cinema proprietors, together with the number of admissions at each price to the "certified" houses, it would be possible to ascertain exactly the amount paid annually by the Cinema-goer in duty and also the total number of admissions at all rates on which duty is payable Unfortunately, this information is not available though I have been able to secure sufficient data on which to base what I believe to be reasonably accurate estimates About 40% of the total Entertainments Duty is paid by means of stamps and tickets and no record is kept of the purchase of these by Cinemas as distinct from other places of entertainment which come within the scope of the duties From available information it is ascertained that over half of the total

Entertainments Duty is paid by "certified" cinemas of which there were only 40 in the Saorstát at the end of 1934 (increased to 45 at the end of 1935). This figure is indicative of the very high proportion of the total Entertainments Duty which is paid by the Cinema-goer, the exact figure is difficult to ascertain owing to the numerous changes in the incidence and scope of Entertainments Duty. It may, however, prior to the increased rates in August, 1935, be approximated closely at 85% of the total receipts giving a figure of £175,000 for the financial year 1934-35. The following are the amounts collected in Entertainments Duty in each year, including sale of stamps at Post Offices:—

Year ended 31st March			£
1924	..	..	167,670
1925	..	..	179,023
1926	..	..	168,572
1927	..	..	159,022
1928	..	..	156,080
1929	..	..	140,225
1930	..	..	154,901
1931	..	..	173,678
1932	..	..	165,409
1933	..	..	173,322
1934	..	..	196,030
1935	..	..	205,743
1936	..	..	255,291

In addition to the increased rates of duty (see Table 6) which came into operation in 1932 and 1935 there were other important changes in the scope of Entertainments Duty which necessarily influenced the receipts from duty. The Finance (New Duties) Act of 1916 had defined an entertainment as "any exhibition, performance, amusement, game or sport to which persons are admitted for payment" with certain exemptions for entertainments for charitable objects or for educational purposes. The changes which were of sufficient importance to affect the receipts from Entertainments Duty to any appreciable extent were the exemption from duty of outdoor games (football, etc.), in 1925 (these were again taxed in 1932 but the duty was withdrawn once more in 1934); the exemption of race meetings, as from May, 1928, and as from October, 1931, the exemption of entertainments, the performers in which are personally present and performing and which consist mainly of one or more of the following (a) dramatic performance, (b) a musical concert, (c) a number of variety items or turns such as are ordinarily given in a music hall. As from May, 1932, the scope of the Entertainments Tax was extended to include dances. Entertainments Duty at present in force covers mainly dances, greyhound track racing, and motor racing, in addition to Cinema entertainments.

The exclusion in 1931 from the scope of Entertainments Tax of admissions to Ciné-Variety theatres where more than half the entertainment consisted of stage show, and the remainder of the exhibition of films, undoubtedly faced the regular Dublin Cinemas with an exceptionally severe type of competition. The provisions of the recent Budget were therefore not wholly unexpected. As from 1st July, 1936, it is provided that when 75% at least of an entertainment consists of personal performance such entertainment shall be duty free, with 50% and less than 75% personal performance, duty shall be paid on

admission prices at one half of the rates applicable to cinematograph performances. The full rates are applicable to all cinematograph entertainments where personal performance is less than 50% of the programme. The payment of half duty rates is confined to theatres paying duty on the basis of certified returns.

Admission to Cinemas, 1934-35

No official record is kept of the total number of admissions to Cinemas in the Saorstát, but I have endeavoured to arrive at a reasonably accurate estimate for the financial year 1934-35—a period prior to the increase in Entertainments Duty in August, 1935.

The method by which Entertainments Duty is collected has already been described and the amount paid in duty by the Cinemas given as approximately £175,000 of which £112,000 was paid by Cinemas making "certified" returns and the remainder by those using adhesive stamps and Government stamped tickets. From a return which has been made available to me showing the total number of attendances at each rate of admission at a large number of "certified" cinemas for a week in each quarter of the year 1934-35, the average price of admission to these houses has been calculated at 12·41 pence and the average amount of Entertainments Tax per admission at 2·45 pence. Dividing the total amount of Entertainments Tax paid by cinemas making certified returns (£112,000) by the average amount of tax per admission, we arrive at a total of 11 million admissions to these Cinemas. The amount of tax represents 19·8% of gross receipts, so the total box office receipts of "certified" Cinemas during the year 1934-35 would be approximately £570,000.

Data from which to determine the attendances at Cinemas paying Entertainments Tax by means of stamps or stamped tickets is not so readily available, as particulars of the sales to Cinemas of stamps and stamped tickets of various denominations are not compiled. Returns of the *total issues* in 1934 of adhesive stamps and of stamped tickets of each denomination were, however, at my disposal. Admissions to this class of Cinemas at prices above 2s. were probably negligible (if indeed there were any such) so that all stamps and tickets which exceeded the 4d. denomination have been excluded from the following calculation on the assumption that they were issued in respect of other classes of entertainment. From the returns of issues of stamps and tickets of each denomination, it was possible to calculate a percentage distribution showing the proportions at each rate of tax and corresponding admission price. Stamps and tickets up to the 4d. denomination in respect of other entertainments (chiefly dances) are of necessity included, but as they only form a small part of the whole, I do not think they are likely to effect the percentage distribution to any great extent. As no information at all was available of the admissions at prices below 6d. which were exempt from tax, there was no alternative but to allow for the same proportion of admissions as for "certified" Cinemas—19%. It is possible that this is too low a figure.

From the percentage distribution it was a simple matter to calculate the average price of admission to non-certified Cinemas and the average rate of tax, the results being 10·69 pence and 2·07 pence respectively. Dividing the latter figure into the total estimated tax receipt from non-certified Cinemas (£63,000) gives a total of $7\frac{1}{4}$ million admissions, while by applying the relation of tax to admission price, the gross box office receipts are calculated at £325,000.

Taking together the figures for all Cinemas we get an estimated total of 18½ million admissions in the year 1934-35, gross box office receipts of £895,000, average price of admission at 11·76 pence and average tax per admission at 2·30 pence. These figures do not take into account free admissions, nor any admissions in respect of which there might have been an evasion of Entertainments Tax.

The following is an attempt to distribute the admissions at each price. It is of course only an approximation.

<i>Price of admission (including duty)</i>				%
Less than 6d.	..	..	..	19
6d. and less than 9d	..	..	..	13
9d. " " " 1s. 0d.	..	..	..	15
1s. 0d. " " " 1s. 3d.	..	..	..	17
1s. 3d. " " " 1s. 6d.	..	..	..	21
1s. 6d. and over	..	..	..	15
				100

The most common prices of admission were 1s. 3d. (21%), 4d (18%) and 1s. (17%). It must be borne in mind that these prices referred to the period prior to the increased Entertainments Tax and consequently increased admission prices.

An estimate of 18½ million paid admissions per annum at first appears a high figure, but in reality it only represents an average of 6 visits per annum for every man, woman and child in the Saorstát, a very low figure when compared with Mr. Rowson's estimate of 22 visits per head per annum for Great Britain. To those who would argue that I have made insufficient allowance for admissions at prices below 6d. to non-certified Cinemas, I would reply that even if a grossly exaggerated figure of another 3 million were added it would not bring the Saorstát figure per head of population up to a third of that for Great Britain.

The following table affords some interesting comparisons with some other countries and cities.

TABLE 7.—TOTAL NUMBER OF ADMISSIONS AND ADMISSIONS PER HEAD OF POPULATION AND PER CINEMA SEAT IN 1934.

	Admissions	Admissions per head of population	Admissions per Cinema seat
	Thous.		
COUNTRIES :			
Great Britain .. .	957,000	22	247
Canada ¹	107,718	10	221
Saorstát Éireann ¹	18,250	6	167
Yugoslavia ² .. .	14,437	1	160
CITIES :			
Liverpool ² ...	29,952	35	416
Vancouver .. .	7,752	31	323
Toronto	19,242	30	264
Winnipeg .. .	6,066	28	276
Dublin ¹ .. .	11,000	23	361
Montreal .. .	18,578	23	305
Prague	12,128	14	217
Warsaw	9,739	9	278
Munich ² .. .	5,320	7	183
Nurnberg ² .. .	2,567	6	197

¹ 1934-35. ² 1933.

It has only been possible to find comparative statistics for admissions in respect of a few countries and cities. Those which are available, however, show wide differences when associated with the figures for the corresponding populations, but not so great variations when related to the Cinema seating capacities. The latter figure for the Saorstát is, of course, low, owing to the large proportion of Cinemas which are only open on a few days each week.

The admissions to Dublin Cinemas (including those in the Borough of Dun Laoghaire) have been estimated as follows.—From the returns for certified Cinemas referred to above it was found that the average price of admission at Cinemas making certified returns in Dublin in 1934-35, was 12·75 pence (rather higher than for the rest of the Saorstát). The number of seats in certified houses at the end of 1934 was 21,000 and each seat was occupied on an average 7·5 times per week or 390 times per annum. From these figures the total attendances at “certified” Cinemas are estimated at 8 million and the gross box office receipts at approximately £430,000. Non-certified houses had approximately 9,500 seats, but since these houses are open, on an average, for shorter hours than the larger houses, the majority of which are in the “certified” class, we must assume a somewhat lower average attendance. I have arbitrarily taken 6 full houses per week (which may err on the high side) and an average admission price of 10·69 pence (the average for all Cinemas in the Saorstát which pay Entertainments Tax by means of stamps or stamped tickets). This gives an attendance of 3 million and receipts of approximately £120,000. Thus I arrive at a total of 11 million paid admissions and gross box office receipts of £550,000. I believe 11 million to be a maximum figure for admissions to Dublin Cinemas and that the commonly quoted estimate of 300,000 admissions per week (15½ million per annum) is a gross exaggeration. Nor is it probable that an estimate for 1935-36 would differ greatly from that for 1934-35, for while on the one hand the seating capacity of Cinemas increased and there were also attendances at the Ciné-variety houses to be added, on the other hand it is generally admitted that the majority of Dublin houses showed decreased attendances following the increased admission prices. It will also be observed from Table 7 that my estimate gives a very high annual attendance per Cinema seat for Dublin as compared with other cities (except Liverpool) for which this information was available. Before leaving the matter of admissions, it might be as well to remind those who consider the long queues to be evidence of the Cinema’s prosperity, that these queues are only at certain hours, and as a rule only in respect of the cheaper-priced seats. There may often be a queue outside and many empty seats inside. It is probable, indeed, that the increased admission prices tended to lengthen the Cinema queues, as many people were obliged to seek a less favourable part of the house than that which they had previously been accustomed to patronise. Further, it must be remembered that while there are queues waiting at the two or three houses showing the most popular films of the week, other houses with less attractive programmes may be left with many vacant seats.

Importation of Films, Customs Duty, Film Rentals

The following are the official statistics of the length of cinematograph films (exposed positives) imported into Saorstát Éireann in each of the calendar years 1924 to 1935 inclusive.

TABLE 8 —IMPORTS, RE-EXPORTS AND NET IMPORTS OF CINEMATOGRAPH FILM

Year	Imports	Re-Exports	Net Imports
	Thousands of linear feet		
1924	5,424	1,862	3,562
1925	6,450	3,513	2,937
1926	6,292	2,117	4,175
1927	6,216	2,098	4,118
1928	6,710	1,934	4,776
1929	7,658	2,289	5,369
1930	7,747	2,523	5,224
1931	6,662	1,969	4,693
1932	6,467	1,575	4,892
1933	6,986	1,552	5,434
1934	6,960	1,290	5,670
1935	7,061	1,471	5,590

Gross imports represent the total length of film imported and include the length of any number of copies, which in the case of news features is very considerable. As a general rule a Cinema film is completely worn out and is not re-exported for use elsewhere. The re-exports include films rejected by the Film Censor, but are chiefly composed of trade show copies which are re-exported after being shown to the Censor and to the Trade as the copy for exhibition is usually not required for some time.

Imports of films have been further classified as follows :—

TABLE 9 —IMPORTS OF CINEMA FILM CLASSIFIED INTO (a) SOUND "NEWS" AND "OTHER" AND (b) SILENT

Description		Imports	Re-Exports	Net Imports
		Thousands of linear feet		
Sound, News :	1934	803	—	803
	1935	711	—	711
,, Other :	1934	6,017	1,290	4,727
	1935	6,225	1,454	4,771
Silent :	1934	140	—	140
	1935	125	17	108

It is not possible to gain any information from the trade statistics regarding the place of production of films. Prior to 1st April, 1935, statistics of imports were compiled by country of consignment but practically all films imported into the Saorstát, whether of British production or not, were *consigned* from Great Britain. Subsequent to this date statistics of imports are compiled by country of origin but as the prints imported into this country are in nearly all cases made in Great Britain, the import statistics still show Great Britain as the country of origin, the expression "country of origin" being defined in the case of manufactured products as the country where the goods were transformed into the condition in which they are introduced into Saorstát Éireann.

From statistics of films presented for censorship, it is found that a very large proportion of the films shown in the Saorstát are American, though the British film is gradually finding a place. In 1931 less than 12% of all films were British and in 1934 and 1935 the proportion rose to nearly 20%. Up to last year the number of Continental films shown was negligible. In 1935, however, five full length dramas and eight interest films amounting in all to about 50,000 feet were submitted. It may be hoped that this is only a beginning and that many of the very fine Continental films will be made available in future to a public who will gradually become less reluctant to hear films in a foreign language with sub-titles only in English.

The following table gives particulars of the net receipts from Customs Duty collected on cinematograph films and the net receipts from fees under the Censorship of Films Act, 1923, in each financial year, as published in the Finance Accounts of Saorstát Éireann.

TABLE 10 — NET RECEIPTS FROM CUSTOMS DUTY AND CENSORSHIP FEES

Year ended 31st March	Net Receipts from Customs Duty on Cinematograph Films	Net Receipts from Fees under the Censorship of Films Act, 1923
	£	£
1924	12,233	476
1925	13,148	4,530
1926	13,244	2,388
1927	13,204	2,266
1928	17,375	2,455
1929	18,902	2,308
1930	22,388	2,741
1931	20,383	2,670
1932	40,612	2,327
1933	48,004	2,488
1934	48,751	2,547
1935	53,821	2,781

Customs Duty on Cinematograph film (positive) at the rate of 1d. per linear foot was first imposed by the Finance (No. 2) Act, 1915. The duty on films was re-enacted annually up to 1932, when a permanent duty was imposed by the Finance Act of that year. From 1919 a preferential rate of duty of 2/3rd has been allowed, and as from 1st August, 1925, films of an educational character have been exempted from duty. As from May, 1931, the duty on Sound Films (other than News) was fixed at 3d. per linear foot. The full rates of duty at present in force on Cinematograph Films, (exposed positives), per linear foot are 3d. for Sound Films, not News, of a width exceeding 7/10 in, and 1d. for News Sound Films, or for Sound Films other than News of 7/10 in or less in width and for Silent Films. The large increase in the net receipts from Customs Duty in the year ended 31st March, 1932, and subsequent years is, of course, due to the duty of 3d. on Sound Films. Except in the case of News film the Customs Duty is passed on by the renter to the exhibitor in the form of a percentage addition (10% for foreign and 6½% for British Films) calculated on whatever percentage of the exhibitor's net receipts is paid in rental. For instance, if an exhibitor is paying 33½% of his net receipts (gross receipts less Enter-tainments Duty) as rental, he must pay a further charge of 10% or 6½% as the case may be, bringing up the percentage paid by him to the renter to 36½ or 35½% according to whether the film is subject to the full or the preferential rate of duty. A film is not admitted to preference unless 25% of the labour is done within the British Empire. Films

are usually imported under Bond and the duty is not paid until they have passed the Censor.

In the final column of the preceding table will be found the net receipts for Fees under the Censorship of Films Act, 1923. The decline in the receipts in 1925-26 is due to the fact that during the calendar year 1924 the State had charged the Renter 16s. 8d. per 1,000 feet, which was reduced to 10s. in 1925 when the Censor moved into the present premises, the property of the State.

For all other items of trade, adequate statistics are available of the declared values of the various articles imported. Difficulties, inherent in the peculiar nature of the film trade, render it, however, practically impossible to arrive at anything approaching the true import value. Films are consigned to agents in Dublin, who rent them at the best prices obtainable and for the longest periods possible; in fact, until such time as the film becomes worn out. In some cases the rental takes the form of a varying percentage on the net receipts of the exhibitor, in other cases it is a flat rate. Even the most expert valuation of a film at the time of importation would be little more than a guess of its potential box-office value. The value at present declared on importation represents the cost of printing the copy without any addition for the initial cost of production, and is consequently no indication of the amount of money leaving the country each year in film rental. I have attempted to estimate this as follows—the amount of Entertainments Tax paid by the Cinemas in 1934-35 has been estimated at £175,000, and the gross box-office receipts at £895,000, which leaves net receipts (gross less Entertainments Tax) at £720,000. The percentage paid in film rental varies from 25% to 50%—even going as high as an occasional 60%. The average is generally quoted at 33½%. I have had confirmation of this figure from a variety of sources, including renters, exhibitors and others closely connected with the trade. The extra amount collected by the renter from the exhibitor to compensate him for the amount paid in Customs Duty is not included, as it is over and above the percentage paid in film rental. The total paid as rental, based on the above figures, therefore, amounted to approximately £240,000. To arrive at the amount leaving the country, it is necessary to deduct Censorship fees and the expenses of the Renters' Offices from this figure. The latter may be estimated at 10% of their receipts, thus giving an approximate sum of £212,000 for the total leaving the country for film rental in the year 1934-35. As allowance has already been made in the Official Trade Statistics for the sum of £52,000 as the value of net imports of Cinematograph film in this period, the invisible exports must be increased (and accordingly the amount of the adverse trade balance) by the sum of £160,000.

There are 22 Film Renters' Offices in the Saorstát, all of which are situated in Dublin. The Renters are the Agents of the various British and American Film Companies whose interests they represent. The Exhibitors are entirely in the hands of the Renters, who have control of the complete supply of films for exhibition. It is interesting to note that recently a number of countries have been enforcing a standard renting contract, among them Germany, Austria and New Zealand. Since 1930 the latter country has had a film-hire tax payable monthly by holders of renters licences, assessed on the net monthly receipts received by the Renters from renting sound picture films. On British films the tax is 10%, on foreign films 25% of net receipts, while films made wholly in New Zealand are exempt.

The introduction of a system of standard renting contracts would entail the registration of all Film-renting companies, the fixing of a maximum percentage rental in respect of a programme of a minimum length, say of 10,000 feet, and the compulsory registration of all renting contracts. A tax on Renters' net receipts might present possibilities as an alternative to the rather complicated system of Entertainments Tax, or as an addition to a reduced scale of Entertainments Tax. It may be argued that standard renting contracts would result in only the inferior class of film reaching this country, as even under existing conditions the average earning power for a film in Ireland is assumed by the distributors to be worth only about 3% of the total for Great Britain and Ireland. The withdrawal of the better films would seem, however, to be a very unlikely eventuality.

Production of Films

So far little headway has been made in this country in the production of films for public exhibition. During the last few years, however, there have been indications of awakening interest, and several films have had a large number of Irish actors or have had some of the scenes shot in Ireland. Outstanding among these was "Man of Aran," a Gainsborough (Gaumont British) film which had an all-Irish cast and was filmed in Ireland, the sound being added in England. So far as I am aware there is only one Film Studio in operation in the Saorstát.

The terms of Section 8 of the Finance (Customs Duties) No. 4 Act, 1932, are interesting in this connection. It provides that, subject to compliance with such conditions as they may think fit to enforce, the Revenue Commissioners may allow a film to be imported free of duty, if it is shown that (a) the production of such film was organised by persons whose chief or only place of business was in Saorstát Éireann and that the producers of such film and the majority of the artists employed in the production thereof, were at the time of such production nationals of or ordinarily resident in Saorstát Éireann, or (b) that such film was produced wholly or mainly in Saorstát Éireann and that the majority of the artists employed in the production of such film were at the time of such production nationals of or ordinarily resident in Saorstát Éireann.

Up to the time of writing only six films have been exempted under these provisions.

In many countries the production of films has recently been receiving special encouragement by the restriction of foreign imports. In Hungary, for example, a law passed in 1935 required 10% of all programmes to consist of Hungarian speaking films of a length exceeding 3,935 feet, half of which had to be produced in Hungary, while the other half might be foreign films dubbed in Hungary. The quota has been increased to 15% in 1936, two-thirds of which may be dubbed. Spain, likewise, has a quota and 5% of each programme must consist of a Spanish film. In Italy the exhibition quota requires one Italian film to be shown to every three foreign films. In Australia quota legislation has been introduced, and in New South Wales there now exists a distributors' and an exhibitors' quota on a progressive five year plan ranging from 5% and 4% respectively in the first year to 15% and 12½% in the fifth year.

Other countries are agitating for the quota system, and doubtless its adoption will be considered in this country when the industry shows sufficient signs of development to justify such measures. The recently

established Irish International Film Agency is making every effort to exploit Irish Films and has already sponsored an "All-Irish programme." We are also indebted to this Agency for some very fine German films which have recently been shown. If at some future date it is decided to entertain a definite policy of encouragement to the domestic film, it is of the greatest importance that the films produced should be required to reach a high standard of excellence. Better that we should produce no films than inferior films.

It is encouraging to learn that the Irish Tourist Association is alive to the possibilities of the carefully sponsored film as an advertisement of the attractions to be found in our country. The sum of £1,500 has been allocated for the making of suitable films for propaganda purposes to be distributed, in the first instance, by the Association's own distributing media, for use primarily in connection with lectures, for exhibition on trans-Atlantic liners, etc. A small unit is already working on the production of films suitable for these purposes. The Association aims high, for it hopes to have a production unit similar to that used by Mr. Flaherty on Aran.

The "Documentary" film has recently made great strides in England. Mr. John Grierson, writing in the *Manchester Guardian* of 31st January, 1936, says "It is plain that films describing and illuminating the real life of industry, commerce and national organisation are in demand and that there is a swiftly growing desire for such civic information among theatre audiences." There should be considerable scope for this type of film in the Saorstát. The film of the Royal Dublin Society's Spring Show has proved very popular, while films dealing with the various stages of production and the processes of manufacture from field to factory of commodities such as sugar and industrial alcohol should prove of enormous educational interest to Irish audiences, both adult and juvenile.

Censorship

The Censorship of Films Act, 1923, came into force on 1st January, 1924, but in order to legalise films due for exhibition from that date, the Censor began to see films at the Trade Shows in November, 1923. The Act provides that no picture shall be exhibited in public by means of a cinematograph or similar apparatus unless and until the official Censor has certified that the whole of such picture is fit for exhibition in public. When part of a picture is considered by the Censor to be unfit for exhibition, by reason of its being "indecent, obscene or blasphemous, or because the exhibition thereof in public would tend to inculcate principles contrary to public morality or would be otherwise subversive of public morality," the person making the application may either separate such part from the picture or may appeal.

The Censorship of Films Appeal Board consists of nine Commissioners, appointed by the Minister for Finance, who hold office for five years and are eligible for re-appointment. The appointment carries no emolument or allowances of any kind.

The decision of the Appeal Board is final, and local bodies can exercise no further restrictions on pictures for exhibition.

The Appeal Board as at present constituted includes representatives of the learned and professional classes. There are two clergymen, a university professor, a dramatist, an architect, a member of the Senate and a medical doctor. Two of the nine members of the Board are women.

The following Table shows the length of film submitted for Censorship and the length shown to the Appeal Board and re-shown to the Censor or to the Appeal Board in each year since the Act came into operation.

TABLE 11 —LENGTH OF FILM SUBMITTED FOR CENSORSHIP

Year	Length of Film Submitted for Censorship			Length of Film Re-shown		
	Drama and Variety	Interest and Topical	Total	Shown to Appeal Board	Re-shown to Censor	Re-shown to Appeal Board
	In thousands of linear feet					
1923/4	4,611	213	4,824	120	—	—
1925	4,576	385	4,961	118	369	3
1926	4,460	286	4,746	184	432	4
1927	4,181	297	4,478	294	536	8
1928	4,144	434	4,578	345	748	12
1929	4,691	400	5,091	259	854	35
1930	4,474	648	5,122	395	697	54
1931	4,047	813	4,861	421	952	36
1932	3,944	669	4,613	522	956	77
1933	3,791	632	4,423	636	1,047	82
1934	4,712	612	5,324	590	983	87
1935	5,048	625	5,672	407	485	32

In 1929 and up to June, 1930, all sound films were projected silently for purposes of Censorship, and when passed the words "Plot and Sound not censored" were endorsed on the Certificate. The Censorship of Films (Amendment) Act, 1930, extended the existing legislation to sound, accompanying pictures, as from 4th June, 1930. Many pictures which had been reserved immediately prior to this date on account of visually objectionable scenes were rejected when re-shown subsequent to the passing of the amending Act, although the deletions had been carried out as required. This applied particularly to the long drama and variety pictures; 57·7%, 14·5% and 27·7% of those presented were passed, cut and rejected respectively in the last seven months of 1930 compared with 73·3%, 17·2% and 9·4% in the first five months of the year.

The length of film submitted for Censorship decreased annually from 1925 to 1927, increased to 1930, decreased steadily to 1933 and increased to reach a maximum of 5,672,000 linear feet in 1935. The drop from 1930 to 1933 is probably due to the fact that many companies were not prepared for sound.

Film is usually imported under bond until it has passed the Censor so that duty is not paid in respect of a film which is subsequently rejected for exhibition. The Renters, however, pay a fee of 10s. per 1,000 feet on drama films and 5s. per 1,000 feet on interest films (including news) submitted for Censorship and £5 in the event of an appeal—the latter fee is automatically refunded if the Appeal Board passes the picture without cuts, and it is at the discretion of the Board to recommend the refund of this fee in the case of a film which is passed with cuts.

The length of Educational Film is included in the totals for "Interest and Topical." No fee has been chargeable since November, 1926, in respect of any film which, in the opinion of the official Censor, is of an educational character. The number of such pictures certified for free import reached a maximum of 63 in 1928, but fell to 10 in 1934 and to 13 in 1935. The exhibition of Educational films receives definite encouragement in many other countries. For example, in Czechoslovakia

an importer of six foreign feature films per year is obliged to distribute a nature educational short. In Germany educational shorts are a compulsory part of programmes, while in Austria domestic films, which are awarded certificates of merit for educational qualities, are granted tax reductions.

The inclusion by the Royal Dublin Society of Sound educational films in its recent programmes may do much towards popularising educational films in this country. It is interesting to note that the length of Interest and Topical Film as a percentage of total films presented for Censorship rose to a maximum of 17% in 1931 (nearly double the proportion of preceding years) but has declined to 11% in 1935.

The Censor may pass a film without cuts and, on the other hand, he may order cuts or may reject it entirely. In the case of a cut or rejected film, the Renter may appeal against the Censor's decision. The length of film shown to the Appeal Board as a percentage of the total length of film presented for Censorship increased fairly regularly in each year up to 14% in 1933 but declined to 7% in 1935, as a result probably of the campaign in the United States against films of an objectionable nature.

The length of film which was re-shown to the Censor to ensure that the cuts were carried out as required also reached a peak in 1933, and since then has declined steeply to 1935.

The average length of films tended to decrease, with the introduction of sound, owing to the reduction in the speed with which films could be shown (90 feet a minute as compared with 100 or over for the old silent film). There is a recent tendency, I am informed, in the direction of longer films. An examination of the length of the Drama and Variety Films submitted for Censorship in a recent period shows that the average length of features generally varies between 5,000–9,000 feet, with an average of about 7,000 feet. Films of two reels average about 1,750 feet, and one reel films about 400 feet—the latter, of course, include "Trailers"—short films which announce coming pictures and which average only about 225 feet.

The following Table shows how Censorship has dealt with the Films presented in each year:—

TABLE 12.—NUMBER OF FILMS PASSED, CUT AND REJECTED.

Year	No. of Films presented	Passed by Censor		Passed by Appeal Board		Total Available for Exhibition	Total Rejected
		Without Cuts	With Cuts	Without Cuts	With Cuts		
1923-4	1307	1037	166	1	3	1207	100
1925	1205	918	172	2	6	1098	107
1926	1327	1040	166	2	7	1215	112
1927	1211	847	219	4	16	1086	125
1928	1121	763	224	6	24	1017	104
1929	1284	867	290	3	8	1168	116
1930	1321	934	202	13	15	1164	157
1931	1369	831	309	9	12	1161	208
1932	1251	710	345	16	21	1092	159
1933	1232	743	340	16	33	1132	100
1934	1504	930	409	15	32	1386	118
1935	1587	1260	239	11	19	1529	58

Rejections were heavy in 1931 (15% of the total number of the films submitted, as a result of the extension of the Censorship to cover sound) since then the decrease has been very marked, i.e., 1935, 80.1% of the drama films submitted were passed without cuts, 16.3%

with cuts and only 3·7% were rejected. The corresponding percentages in 1931 were 61·4%, 23·4% and 15·2%. These figures must not be interpreted as a slackening of vigilance on the part of the Censor and Appeal Board, but rather to the higher moral standard of the American film, to which reference has already been made.

The Censorship of Films (Amendment) Act, 1925, also requires that the exploitation sheets relating to films should be submitted to the official Censor. This Act covers all pictorial publicity, that is, printed matter, posters, stills, etc., and provides that it is "unlawful for any person to display in public in relation to the exhibition of a picture any photograph or other reproduction of any part of such picture, unless such picture, including the part reproduced, has been certified by the Censor." I am informed on the best authority that Cinema advertisements cover on an average over 1,700 square yards of hoardings each week in Dublin, and with this figure in mind, the importance of the Censorship of pictorial publicity can hardly be over-emphasised.

I do not propose to deal with the many problems of Film Censorship. Censorship has come to stay, and few thinking people will deny its necessity, though they may differ in opinion as to the degree of its application. Several matters have presented themselves to my attention in the course of the preparation of this paper, which I think are of general interest. Like many another, I have often felt irritated at obvious cuts which almost destroy the trend of a picture. I have now learnt that these cuts are often made before the film is presented for Censorship here, and that, in fact, when any portion of a film is cut by the orders of the Censor or of the Appeal Board, the greatest care is taken to interfere as little as possible with the continuity of the picture.

I have also laboured under the delusion that films for exhibition in this country were probably more severely censored than in other countries. It came somewhat as a surprise to me to learn that about half the feature films imported into Australia are either cut or rejected altogether. Many other countries exercise rigorous censorship, though not always for quite the same reasons. In Germany, for instance, a careful watch is kept for anything which might be construed as anti-national, while in the Scandinavian countries censorship is mainly directed against horror or suicide scenes, particularly as regards the exhibition of such films to children.

The Saorstát Official Censor and the Appeal Board are limited in their powers and have no authority to cut or reject pictures which may be described as gangster or horror films, or which may be regarded as anti-national in so far as they may present this country in an unfavourable light.

I am deeply indebted to the Official Censor for his invaluable assistance in the preparation of this section of my paper.

SUMMARY

The following is a Summary of the main results. The basis of the various estimates I believe to be sound, but only a full investigation backed by official authority could give precise results, lacking this it has only been possible to make the best use of the scanty material available.

1. In 1935 there were 190 Cinemas in the Saorstát with a total seating capacity of over 111,000. Of these Cinemas about 165, with 100,000 seats, were open for at least one performance on five or more days per week. Thirty-six Cinemas (excluding Ciné-Variety theatres), with a third of the total seating capacity of the Saorstát are situated in Dublin

(including Dun Laoighaire). The size of Cinemas varies widely, ranging from an average of over 900 seats in Dublin to about 400 in Cinemas situated in small towns. One half of the seating capacity of Dublin Cinemas is in houses of over 1,000 seats, while in towns with less than 4,000 population, three quarters of the seats are in Cinemas of not more than 500 seats. The hours during which Cinemas are open vary widely, the performance in many city houses being continuous, while in the small country houses there are sometimes only two or three performances each week.

2. Prior to August, 1935, Entertainments Tax amounted to about 20% of gross box office receipts, since that date it amounts to nearly 30%. The amount of Entertainments Tax paid by Cinemas in the year 1934-35 is estimated at £175,000.

3 The number of admissions to Cinemas in the Saorstát in the year 1934-35 is estimated at $18\frac{1}{2}$ million, averaging 6 admissions per annum per head of the population. Total box office receipts are estimated at £895,000, the average price of admission at 11.76 pence (including tax) and the average amount of tax per admission at 2.30 pence. It must be remembered, however that these figures refer to the period preceding the increased rates of Entertainments Tax. Dublin and the surrounding districts account for 11 million admissions with box office receipts of £550,000; that is, somewhat over 200,000 admissions weekly at a cost of approximately £10,000. In other words, these figures represent an average of 23 visits to the Cinema per annum per head of the corresponding population.

4. The net import of films amounts to about $5\frac{1}{2}$ million linear feet per annum. About 20% of the film imported in 1935 was British, the remainder was mostly American. Net receipts from Customs Duty amount to over £50,000 per annum. This duty is passed on by the Renter to the Exhibitor. The amount paid by the Exhibitor on film rental varies from 25% to 50% of net receipts (box office receipts less, Entertainments Tax) the most common rental being $33\frac{1}{3}\%$, excluding the additional percentage paid to cover Customs Duty. It is estimated that after Customs Duty, Censorship fees and the expenses of the Renters' Offices have been paid, well over £200,000 left the country in film rental in the year 1934-35.

5 So far very little has been done in this country in the production of films for public exhibition. There have, however, been signs of growing interest in recent years.

6. All pictures for public exhibition must be shown to the Censor. Of the 1,587 films submitted in 1935, 1,271 were passed without cuts, 258 were passed with cuts, and 58 were rejected altogether

Main Sources.

In addition to the various Acts relating to Entertainments Duty, Customs Duty on Films, and Censorship of Films, referred to throughout the paper, the following were the main published sources of information :

Annuaire General de la Cinematographie, 1934; *Kinematograph Year-Book*, 1936; *Cinema Buyers' Guide*, 1935; *A Statistical Survey of the Cinema Industry of Great Britain in 1934*, by S. Rowson, M.Sc., *Social Survey of Merseyside*, Vol. III., *Statistical Year-Book of Bavaria*, 1934, *Motion Picture Statistics*, 1934, *Canadian Bureau of Statistics*; *Statistical Year-Book of Italy*, 1935, *Statistical Year-Book of Switzerland*, 1934; *Statistical Year-Book of Yugoslavia*, 1933; *Concise Statistical Year-Book of Poland*, 1935.

DISCUSSION.

Dr. Kiernan proposing the vote of thanks said that Miss Beere had described the cinema as one of the greatest social institutions the world had ever known, and it was an institution about which there was some fear amongst those who thought about social problems. The worst fears were vague ones, and thanks were due to Miss Beere for beginning an analysis of a difficult and important subject.

In Table 5 of her paper she gave figures of international comparison. These comparisons had become increasingly common since the League of Nations had begun the collection of international statistics, and he was very doubtful of their value as a general rule, and exceptionally doubtful as regards cinemas. The table gave a number of countries with their cinemas and population per cinema. The cinema was not a statistical unit, and for that reason he thought the table failed. Figures of the numbers of cinemas, without reference to their seating capacity gave no information for purposes of comparison, say, between Ireland, England and the United States. Apart from seating capacity of cinemas, there was the question of different types of population, for instance, the disproportion in Ireland between urban and rural populations.

In Table 4 the figures of seating capacity were given, and there was a startling comparison between Dublin and London, where in both cities the number of people per cinema seat was 14. There was a great discrepancy between the spending powers of the two populations, and yet there was the same number of seats for the population of Dublin as of London. One of the points that must be considered here was the alternative forms of visual entertainment available. In Dublin, the Abbey Theatre had 600 seats, the Gate 450 and the Gaiety 1,200—roughly 2,300 per night. There were six performances a week—that was 14,000 seats weekly—and he had learned that on an average the seats were two-thirds full. That gave a figure of 10,000 seats per week. Prices of admission, ranging from 1s. 4d to 5s., averaged 3s., or an expenditure of £75,000 a year in Dublin on the legitimate theatre. There were 36 cinemas, with roughly 660,000 seats a week. According to Miss Beere's calculations, they were a third filled—say, 200,000, and the average price of admission was about 1s. That meant that half a million pounds a year was expended in Dublin on cinemas as compared with £75,000 on the theatre. The discrepancy between such figures was much greater in Dublin than in London. The number of theatres and other forms of visual entertainment in London was much higher. The poorer the country and city was, the more cinematic. Dublin's poverty, as compared with London, would lead to a greater cinema population in Dublin than in London.

The study of cinema statistics was a study of consumption. £900,000 a year was spent in the Saorstát on one form of entertainment—probably 4 per cent of the national expenditure; certainly, a much higher proportion of the national expenditure than the expenditure on broadcasting, which gave more entertainment at less cost.

The decrease in the number of educational films entering was an unpleasing fact. What were called documentary films had been given a great filip in England. They had been subsidised by the Empire Marketing Board to foster Empire trade, and when the Empire Marketing Board came to an end, the G.P.O. had taken over a great deal of the work in connection with these documentary films. He feared, however, that Irish audiences did not like education mixed with entertainment.

He proposed that the best thanks of the Society should be accorded to Miss Beere for her paper.

Canon Drury said it was of very great importance to have figures such as these, and they were indebted to Miss Beere for having given them solid facts. The cinema had come to stay, and people must study everything connected with it if they were to be in a position to criticise it intelligently. This paper would be a very valuable foundation for any future study of the subject in the Saorstát.

Mr. Montgomery said that listening to the paper had made him realise that he had been building up statistics for 23 years without knowing it. He would say nothing about the moral aspect of the censorship, since they were concerned with figures.

Recently, on checking up work to the end of April, he had found that he had seen 309,231 feet short of the corresponding period last year. He had discovered that the shortage was due to the reduction in the number of rejections and appeals, as a result of the new movement in the American studios.

From 1st January, 1935, to 23rd May, 1935, 236 feature films, of an average of about 7,000 feet, had been presented. In the same period this year, 224 feature films were presented—a shortage of only 12—which would not account for the big decrease in footage. In 1935, the number available for exhibition was 224, in 1936, it was 221, a shortage of only three less than last year. Last year there had been passed without cuts 145 films, or 64·7 per cent., in this year 165 or 73·6 per cent. Last year the Appeal Board passed 5 without cuts and 11 with cuts; this year 2 without cuts and 2 with cuts. The absolute rejections last year were 5·1 per cent., this year 1·2 per cent. Up to the end of the period he was dealing with, there had been this year only 11 appeals, in the same period last year the number of appeals was 34.

The United States of America really called the tune in the film industry. 84 per cent of the world's pictures were made in America, and 90 per cent of them were made in eight film studios.

He was grateful for the information that Miss Beere's paper had given him. He had not had any idea that there were so many interesting figures attached to the cinema industry.

Mr. Barry took exception to the statement that the film industry was one of the greatest "social" institutions humanity had ever known if by this was meant "socially beneficial." It had been very much commercialised, especially in America, and the ideas of European

civilisation had not been stressed in the plays, reproduced or written by the film producers. Apart from this point, which entered into the arena of general controversy, there were certainly great possibilities in the film industry. The subject of the paper was one of very great importance from the social point of view.

Mr. Eason said he had a fellow-feeling with Dr Kiernan on the subject of international statistics, though that did not detract from his appreciation of Miss Beere's paper.

He did not agree with Dr Kiernan that a certain amount of educational value in films was not appreciated by Irish audiences, though, of course, they should not be given too much of it. He did not feel at all critical or doubtful of the value of the cinema, in spite of what was said about it, but he was often critical of the people who, from lofty platforms, questioned the value of the cinema. He believed human nature was capable of rejecting most of the bad, and that the position as regards the effect of the film upon cinema-goers should not be taken too seriously. He noted the reference in the paper to the efforts of some countries to prevent children seeing certain types of films, and that, of course, was very desirable.

The President: One of the most interesting points concerned the significance of the cinema position in this country from the point of view of economic relations with the outside world. One heard figures quoted, both about the cinema and other things, which seemed to distort the contribution that was made to the foreigner for imports, invisible or otherwise. It was comforting to learn that the trend, in respect of the cinema, was no greater than Miss Beere had indicated. She had mentioned that we paid about £52,000 for the imports of films, and gave the figure of £212,000 as the amount for film renting. He would suggest to her that she had inadvertently made a slip in mentioning the figure of £160,000—subtracting the £52,000 from the £212,000—that we pay to the outsider in respect of film rent. It might rather appear that the figure paid to the film renter instead of being described as an invisible export should be described as an invisible import.

Just as the whole aspect of the film industry had been altered by the transition from the silent to the sound film, it was conceivable that in the course of time the progress of television might have radical effects upon the sound film. This was especially of interest in the case of countries where film production might have difficulty in reaching development. Television might enable them to enjoy forms of entertainment provided by the foreigner without having to make payment for the importation of films.

With regard to the statistical study of the film business, he was sure that they were all grateful to Miss Beere for the paper she had produced. The matter had received a certain amount of attention elsewhere before this, apart from the examination made recently before the Royal Statistical Society. The Carnegie foundation had assisted an examination of the problems of the cinema from various points of view. It had come up on more than one occasion before Imperial Conferences, it was raised in Canada in 1932. So that the matter had had a growing amount of attention. They were much indebted to Miss Beere for the material she had supplied, which would enable the study of the subject here to be linked up with studies made elsewhere.

Miss Beere, returning thanks for the vote of thanks, said that Mr. Barry had remarked that he did not agree that the cinema was one of the greatest social institutions the world had ever known. She had not claimed that its importance was either cultural or educational, and Mr. Barry himself, later in his remarks, had said that it was of importance from the social point of view.

She was in agreement with Dr. Kiernan's remarks about the doubtful value of certain comparisons made from international statistics. Table 5 had been included with important reservations. She had been unable to associate the number of cinemas with the seating capacity for many countries, or with the density of population, but thought that the numbers of cinemas, compared with the figures of population, did reveal something of importance. If the figures could have been associated with seating capacity and density of population, there would probably be some changes in the order of the countries, but those that were high in the list would still remain high, and the countries low in the list would remain low. She thought his estimate of the attendances of children was much too high. With regard to the sex classification of attendances at the cinema, only a few points had, of course, been touched on in her paper, and she hoped that others would take the subject up where she had left off.

She agreed with the President about the inadvertent slip in describing the figure paid to the film renters as an invisible "export." It should read "invisible import."

Miss Beere concluded by expressing her gratitude to Mr. Montgomery for the assistance he had given her, without which it was doubtful whether the paper could have been written.

CORRECTION.

Page 100, 14th line from end of page, for "exports" read "imports"