for I believe, as I have already said, that their influence is unwholesome.

ANIMALS IN FILMS

The inclusion of animals in films was a subject dealt with at some length in our 1933 Report, but there still appears to be some producers who are unaware of our standards in respect to such films. We are all, I am sure, animal lovers, and I know you will welcome the conclusions we have come to in respect to these films. First, we do not allow any incident on the screen depicting cruelty, or apparent cruelty. If scenes in a film are introduced with the object of showing pain or suffering on the part of any animal, whether such pain is caused by accident or design, such scenes are prima facie censorable. Secondly, we do not allow any incident if it can reasonably be supposed to have been produced by means which necessitated cruelty, or restraint amounting to cruelty. In this connection, the Board has received very valuable help from the members of a Committee which was set up last year to consider this problem in all its bearings. The members of the Committee are Professor Sir Frederick Hobday (Royal Veterinary College), Dr. W. T. Calman (Natural History Museum), Mr. Bertram W. Mills, Major E. E. Austin (Zoological Society), Captain Fergus MacCunn (R.S.P.C.A.), Mr. C. W. Hobley (Society for the Preservation of the Fauna of the Empire), Capt. C. W. Hume (University of London Animal Welfare Society). You, of course, know much better than I do, but I should imagine that films including animals must be very popular, and especially must this be the case with children. It is therefore all the more necessary that care should be exercised not to allow incidents which could accustom the youthful mind to acts of cruelty. I have taken the liberty to draw attention to this matter again in the hope that it will prevent the filming of incidents in the future, to which, in the past, we have had to take exception.

RELIGIOUS FILMS

As you can well imagine, the greatest care must be exercised in subjects dealing, however reverently, with religious views, and the practice of religious rites. We frequently have many anxious hours over stories which are beautifully carried out, lest we should run the risk of
touching on the sacred and delicate ground of religious feeling. Both of my predecessors established the standard, with which I heartily agree, that no incident shall be passed which is likely to offend the just susceptibilities of any religious section of the community. Throughout the whole of the Board’s history, this principle has not only been acknowledged, but it has been carried out to the letter. In this connection, we have received very helpful and sound advice from leaders of the Established Church, the various Nonconformist Churches, the Roman Catholic Church and the Salvation Army. We find those whom we have met very sympathetic to the cinema, and view our problems with an outlook which proves them to be particularly broad-minded, and desirous of being fair-minded to the trade. There would, of course, be far less anxiety with some of these films if they were shown under special conditions, amid an atmosphere which is somewhat different from that which obtains for general entertainment and amusement. As you know, this atmosphere is created under the special conditions imposed by local authorities, in the exhibition of films depicting the Life of our Saviour. These conditions include, inter alia, no pictorial posters; no mention of the names of the actors; no smoking in the auditorium; musical accompaniment to be of a religious character; and no other film to be shown in the same programme. Taking these conditions into consideration, we have to be particularly careful in the representation of the Sacraments of any of the established churches. For this reason, scenes of christenings, marriages and funerals have to be, so far as the words of the services are concerned, reduced to a minimum. Under no circumstances do we allow a farce or knock-about comedy to be enacted in what is represented as a place of public worship, and several films have been rejected on this account. Comic incidents at a baptism, wedding or funeral are quite out of place, and are always deleted. The renters here agree with us that such incidents are quite unsuitable for public exhibition in this country.

**SOME SUGGESTIONS**

And now, may I be bold enough to throw out one or two suggestions to you exhibitors, with the sole object of trying to be helpful to you. As you know, there was a voluntary arrangement made with your Association and local authorities, whereby you undertook to announce on all
publicity the category of "A" or "U" into which each film had been placed by the Board of Film Censors. In London, this arrangement was made a condition of the licence, but in most provincial centres, it has not been similarly enforced. May I suggest that you would all be well advised to honourably carry out the arrangements made by your Council, no matter in what part of the country you may be situated? If you take the London daily papers, you will find the category marked against each film advertised, and this condition applies as well to the posters and publicity. It has been found in practice that this has given confidence to the public, and has reduced the number of complaints which were previously received about children being inadvertently taken to films which were clearly unsuited for them.

Another point to which my attention has been drawn by local authorities is one that you should watch carefully. I refer to programmes of "U" films when unaccompanied children are admitted to your cinemas. It sometimes happens, at these performances, that you show the trailer for a forthcoming attraction which has been placed in the "A" category. I know how easily it can be done, but a little thought on the part of those in charge, on instruction from you, may save trouble in the future. You are aware that there have been several successful prosecutions for showing "A" films when unaccompanied children were in the audiences, in contravention of the condition which has now been generally accepted throughout the country. For this purpose, I need hardly remind you that a trailer is a film within the meaning of the condition. I merely mention the fact, for we have found that, in the majority of the prosecutions, the arrangements had been left in the hands of the manager, and the proprietor of the cinema was unaware of any breach of the conditions until he received the summons. Although this matter is not directly associated with my function as censor, I hope you will not take exception to my desire of trying to be helpful from the experience I and my staff have acquired during the ordinary course of our daily duty.

A very satisfactory feature of the past year has been the marked diminution of the hostile criticism of the cinema and films, and of adverse comment on the work of the Board by a small section of the Press. On the contrary, there has been a much more practical appreciation evinced
of the standards we have sought to establish during the twenty-two years of our existence. Many tributes to the value of the services rendered to the public have been recorded, not the least of these being that paid, recently, by the representatives of the American Film Production Code Committee, who visited this country, and said their censorship in the U.S.A. was based practically on the lines of the British censorship.

The Trade Consultative Committee, which includes representatives from your Association, has proved helpful to me over and over again. Its members are always ready to meet when any point of trade interest has to be considered, and their co-operation, as I say, has proved most useful, although no occasion has arisen of late that has made it necessary to call them together.

In conclusion, on behalf of myself and the British Board of Film Censors, I should like to take this opportunity of expressing to you, and to the Trade, our deep appreciation of the loyal and sympathetic support which has always been accorded to us. Our task is delicate and difficult; it involves many hours of anxious thought, deliberation and discussion, and without your loyal and sympathetic support it would have been well-nigh impossible. That support has always been given ungrudgingly. To all of you, who have done so much to make the cinema clean and wholesome entertainment for the million, the British Public owe a debt of gratitude.