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# Linwood Library Gazette

"Reading is to the mind what exercise is to the body."

Vol. 3, No. 1



October, 1937.

## THE CINEMA AND THE LIBRARY

(From the Official Organ of the New Zealand Library Association.)

In an article in the June number of the "Library Association Record," by M. C. Pottinger, F.L.A., the question of educational film is discussed. "The cinema grew up, as all of us must have observed, in an atmosphere of considerable disapproval from educationists, and generally was regarded with disfavour by all who believed that entertainment need not necessarily be divorced from intelligence or good taste. The cinema industry had its origins as a showman's business." Mr Pottinger goes on to point out that the ordinary commercial film has improved immensely during its short life, and that now we are frequently privileged to see "such honest, intelligently conceived films as 'Man of Aran,' 'Dawn to Dawn,' 'Fury,' 'The Story of Louis Pasteur,' and 'The Private Life of Henry VIII.'"

From this consideration Mr Pottinger goes on to the fact that Great Britain gives the lead to the rest of the world in the production of the documentary film. As John Grierson, leader of the documentary film movement, put it—"Essentially the art of producing a documentary film is the art of skilled and faithful reporting, depending for its success upon the ability to use the camera to build up an interesting and dramatic picture of the life led and the work done in the world of everyday reality." The author goes on further to the direct use of films in the library as one of those

activities vaguely and conveniently termed extension work, and it is in this aspect of the matter that the Dunedin Branch of the Association has, as reported elsewhere in this issue, interested itself.

"Many libraries," says Mr Pottinger, "sponsor lectures, university extension courses, etc., on the principle that such activities consolidate the library's claim to be the community's cultural centre, and tend to encourage the circulation of books in the more solid and serious sections of the library. It is a very short step from the educational lecture to the educational film, and I have little doubt that in the next few years we shall find many of our large municipal services installing 16mm. sound projectors, and organising programmes of films designed to stimulate the use of their non-fiction sections. The use of the film in the class-room and as a substitute for university and other lectures, is advancing by leaps and bounds. Only the other day, the Minister of Education expressed publicly his ambition to see cinematograph apparatus installed in every elementary and secondary school in the kingdom. It is not, I think, over-sanguine to suggest that cinema screens will shortly be as common in our libraries as lecture platforms are now.

"And finally, it is not, I think, too far-fetched to envisage a day when we shall see local authorities administering local cinemas in the same spirit as they at present administer public libraries. Public libraries were established, and are conducted, as a means of imparting to the people, education and intelligent recreation.