

SCHEDULE 6—DEPARTMENTAL LETTER APPROVING FORMATION OF FILM INDUSTRY BOARD

27th October, 1938.

Sir Victor Wilson,

President,

Motion Picture Distributors' Association of Australia,
Care of Waterloo Hotel,
Wellington.

DEAR SIR VICTOR,—

PROPOSALS FOR THE FORMATION OF A TRADE COMMITTEE FOR THE MOTION PICTURE INDUSTRY

In reply to your letter of 26th instant, I have to advise that the subject matter of this letter, and the preliminary agreement for the formation of the Trade Committee, which has now been signed by representatives of both exhibitors and renters, have been given very careful consideration. I am now directed by the Hon. Minister of Internal Affairs, with the concurrence of his colleague, the Hon. Minister of Industries and Commerce, whose Department is mainly responsible for the enforcement of the licensing regulations, to inform you as follows:—

- (1) The Government welcomes the formation of a Trade Committee to deal internally with matters affecting the industry. It is considered that this will simplify the process of rationalization of the business and will, to some extent at any rate, avoid the necessity for any further Government control of an industry which is admittedly of a complex character.
- (2) The Government will be pleased to consider any representations made by this committee, when set up, on matters affecting either the industry generally or any particular section of it.
- (3) The Minister of Internal Affairs will approve of any modifications of the Standard Contract which are necessary to enable the proposed Trade Committee to function as an arbitration tribunal with respect to film-hiring contracts.
- (4) The Government will give further consideration to the proposal that the Trade Committee should function as a body representative of the trade to advise the Government on matters referred to it, if it is considered as a result of experience that the committee is likely to function effectively for this purpose.
- (5) It is desired as a condition of approval that arrangements should be made for the appointment to the Trade Committee of representatives of the Departments of Internal Affairs and Industries and Commerce, such representatives to act as observers and have powers of discussion but not of voting.
- (6) It is considered that in the meantime at any rate, the Committee could function satisfactorily without specific statutory authority. The question of giving it a constitution under the Cinematograph Films Act will be considered at a later date should events determine that this procedure is desirable.
- (7) It is suggested for the consideration of your Association that it is unlikely that the proposed Trade Committee will function successfully unless the representatives of both exhibitors and renters on the Committee are empowered to carry out their functions without any restrictions being placed on their freedom of action.

I am also directed to state for the information of your Association that the assurance contained in your letter under reply with respect to film supplies has been accepted at its face value only in view of the explanation given with respect to the personal difficulties under which you were operating and the absence in Melbourne of a number of members of your Association—these facts making an unqualified assurance impracticable.

I am instructed to make special reference to this matter in consequence of the fact that the members of your Association have on several occasions by concerted action disturbed the normal procedure with respect to the making of film hiring contracts, at times when legislation affecting the film industry was either proposed or, as in the present case, had been completed. The self-evident purpose of this action is to force the hand of the Government by bringing pressure to bear through the New Zealand exhibitors. As intimated in my letter of yesterday's date, the New Zealand Government is not prepared to discuss any proposals with any section of the industry under conditions of duress of this character.

I am further directed to convey to yourself and the industry generally the best wishes of both Ministers concerned in the administration of the controlling legislation in New Zealand, and to express the hope that the formation of the proposed Trade Committee will result in more harmonious relations between the two sections of the industry than has existed previously.

Yours faithfully,

(Sgd.) R. GIRLING-BUTCHER,
Chief Inspector of Films.