

PART FOUR

1918 Navyug, Bombay, September, 1918.

Phalke:

"God, who helps an honest determination, fulfills all desires. When I wrote article nos. 2 & 3, I was in the gloom of despair. At that time, the flame of self-confidence was flickering due to the absence of oil (or affection). Will this flame of self-confidence get extinguished when this material body is dried up due to the absence of flesh? No. When Lord Shri Krishna, who is my all in all, the nectaar enlivening me, the protector against disease, my future, my life, when my lord is pouring on me showers of affection in the form of the Gila, which flame can get extinguished? which hurricane can dare to extinguish it

The Lord has cast on me a compassionate glance, after I have toiled hard for the last twenty-four years. Now, He feels that He has tested me enough, so he became kind, and entered the hearts of other human beings, and fondled me through them.

The Lord deliberately kept me away from the Goddess of Richness during my education. He was afraid that I may perhaps get spoiled by her fondling, and forget my mission. Since I have now passed the examination, she is caressing me, kissing me, and admiring me. She is tying gold threads and amulets around my neck against the Evil eye.

Oh Mother! Goddess! O Laxmi! Keep me under your protection, and keep me free from blemishes. Don't allow me to lose my innocence. What pleasures lie in being without passions, jealousy, and temptations! O God! May I remain a child forever! As I grow my beard and moustaches, let my inner heart always have the purity of a child's.

My studio, Haudacha Bungalow, is not a place of pilgrimage. A devotee would at least acquire some merit if he visits Panchvati, Tapovan Godavari, and Shri Ram (temple). A large number of people drop in at the studio casually, at any time, for their amusement simply because it happens to be on the way. Obviously, this studio is not public property. When this author was in difficulty, how many of these gallants came to his help? If even a dozen out of a thousand pilgrims visit the studio, it disturbs the work. If I talk to them, I waste my time. If I don't talk with them, they feel let down. Visitors are certainly welcome if they come in my leisure time and after fixing up appointments by correspondence. I will arrange to satisfy their curiosity. Other pilgrims cum visitors may drop a gold coin, and go away silently.

For all these years, I have constantly been asking for financial assistance, and now I am so exhausted that I cannot exert myself further. This gramophone record (asking for financial help) is so used, that it may crack at any moment. Even the visitors who came by appointment should conclude their visit after asking just the necessary questions.

My films are Swadeshi, in the sense that the capital, ownership, employees, and the stories, are Swadeshi. The material and equipment required are simply not available in India at any cost. They are all foreign. I have read one of my fellow film maker's advertising his film as 'completely Swadeshi'. I am not able to understand the meaning of 'completely Swadeshi' simply by using higher and higher superlatives. Oh India! You have already become the laughing-stock of the world, and the variety of types in the printing press is helping in this. The same advertisement says, 'made by a person who has not gone abroad'. This phrase filled my heart with admiration for that man. I have never dared to do that I have been abroad thrice. Yes, I have the desire to go there for the fourth time, as it is necessary. There is no end to observation, education, and self-improvement.

In a way, the phrase 'made without going abroad', is serving the national cause. We, the lowly traders outside Poona, have to be proud of the fact that India has been ready for Home Rule by this sentence, and will have to get inspired !

Oh, Mr. Montagu, why don't you learn the Marathi language, and see for yourself the fire that lies in our press advertisements. ?

I never blow my own trumpet. People admire me for my humble offerings like 'Lanka Dalian', and 'Shri Krishna Janma', What can I do about it ? How can I prevent people from giving a gold medal to my five year old daughter, for her acting ?

Now, I intend to conclude this series of articles, and take leave of my readers. I may write about the remaining subjects. Sometime later, in my life of retirement For the time being, the series of articles has served the purpose. God has bestowed His blessings on me.

I take leave of the readers with the hope that the cause of the nation should be served through films, and that the art of film should go on improving, and be more and more popular in future.

The structure of a good film having a good human, emotional, interesting, and moral story leads us long the path of Good, because it shows us life as it is. This task is not easy, but, by God's grace, the dumb do speak, and the feeble do climb the mountains. So, I have been able to achieve this difficult task."

1927-28 EVIDENCE

INDIAN CINEMATOGRAPH FIL ENQUIRY COMMITTEE

Q. I suppose you started the film industry in the country ?

A. Yes, I began the film industry in India in the year 1912.

Q. What was the company which started ?

A. It was simply called "Phalke's Films".

Q. How many years did you work at it?

A. I worked at it for nearly six years, and then we formed a company called "The Hindustan Film Company".

Q. How many films did you produce ?

A. I have produced about twenty subjects, chief of them being "Lanka Dahah", "Shri Krishna Janma", "KaliyaMardan", etc.

Q. What are the defects in the production which you have noticed at present ? A. Almost all the productions in India lack in technique, and artistic merit. The acting is not good. The photography, especially, is of the worst class. Nobody knows anything the art.

Q. Now, too ?

A. Yes, even now it is the case. There is, no doubt, a noticeable improvement. Even now people invest their money in this film industry without themselves knowing what type of cameras are to be purchased. Nobody tries to study the thing.

Q. That is the chief difficulty?

A. Yes.

Q. What is your suggestion to improve the condition?

A. My suggestion is that there must be a school established somewhere in India, to teach the cinema industry photography, acting, screenplay and scenario writing, &c.

Q. Do you think one school will suffice for the whole of India?

A. I am not able to say that. Some restrictions ought to be placed on producing films in this country.

Q. Will the school be self-supporting?

A. I think it will be, but the government must also help it.

Q. What was your experience when you began the film industry in this country? A. I had to do everything. I had to teach acting, I had to write the scenarios, do the photography, and the actual projection, too. Nobody knew anything in India about the industry in 1911

Q. Were you in Poona ?

A. No. I did my business at Nasik. I began the industry in Bombay, but I preferred Nasik later on.

Q. Was your company well financed ?

A. It was almost my self-sacrifice at the beginning.

Q. Is it now a paying concern, the Hindustan Film Company ?

A. Yes, it is.

Q. How many films do they produce every year ?

A. About 12 to 14. I think, most satisfactorily, one subject will take about 3 to 4 months to produce. Nowadays, nobody looks to the quality of the production. Every firm looks to the quantity alone. The business will never last if we don't look to the quality.

Q. In spite of the existing defects in the film industry in this country, do you think that Indian films are popular ?

A. Yes, certainly they are, but I am of the opinion that more efforts should be made to produce them better.

Q. Do you think it will be any use if the government establishes a studio of its own?

A. I have not thought over the subject.

Q. Do you think there are private agencies who could be entrusted with the production of these educational films required by the government?

A. Of course, in the beginning, these educational films rarely pay.

Q. Have you any suggestions to make on that side ?

A. There is a great difficulty experienced by Indian producers. There is the monopoly of the Madams, who control 1/3 or 1/4 of the cinema houses in India and Burma. There is another firm in Bombay which is thinking of doing the same thing, and there are Western pictures (serials) which run for nearly 4 to 8 weeks consecutively. So, private producers find it difficult to push their productions.

Did you, or your company, ever try with Madans to take your pictures ?
They produce their own pictures.

That is only natural, you can't complain about that?
I don't think we have ever tried that.

So you don't think, from your practical experience, that they put difficulties in your way, or in the way of your company?

No, they have never tried to do so; sometimes, they have difficulties, too.

Now, do you think there is room for more cinema theatres in the country? Yes,
there is great room, but the pictures must be good, that is the main thing.

But that depends upon the producers?

Yes. There is great demand for the cinema, and people like it immensely.

What is your suggestion for bringing more theatres into existence? T
have not thought over it.

Do you think the cinema has got a pernicious influence upon the public?

No, I don't think so. I think, though, that love subjects should not be shown as largely as they are at present.

But you don't think there is any bad effect from that ? I
don't think there is any bad influence at all.

You think it is better to minimise such scenes?

Yes. There are certain etiquettes, manners, and customs I know of Western manners and customs having gone to foreign countries.

You say that Indian films are very popular, but at the same time, you say that they lack good technique, photography, and artistic merit Do you think they will retain their popularity even if they are not improved? I think they will be popular still.

But if they go on producing as they do now, do you think they will retain their popularity ?
Their popularity will decrease then.

They will cease to be popular with the people who frequent cinemas ?
After a time, yes.

Q. How much do you spend on an average film, at present, approximately?

A. Say, about 10,000 rupees.

Q. And you get a good return on that investment, I suppose?

A. Yes.

Q. How long does it take you to recover the money laid out on each film ?

A. Generally, a film should last for at least four months, but sometimes they are spoiled, owned to bad operation and bad machines, within 3 to 4 weeks.

Q. And therefore, you have to make more copies, I suppose ?

A. Yes. The usual projection speed should be about 3 to 4 thousand feet per hour, but sometimes the projectionists even show 7 to 10 thousand feet per hour, with the result that the film is easily spoiled.

Q. Is not the orthodox rate 4,000 feet per hour ?

A. Yes, it is a good average. If only 6,000 feet are shown every one and a half hours, then the film will last longer.

Q. But then the cost of making a fresh positive is not very great ?

A. Though it is not great, it does not pay well.

Q. Can you tell me how long it will take you to get back your capital spent on a film, say, an average film ? Six months?

A. Yes, it will take about six months.

Q. After that period, all income will be pure profit ?

A. Yes.

Q. If you want to improve your films, you must spend more money, I suppose? A. Yes. AT present, though people spend their money lavishly, they don't care for the quality of the films produced.

Q. You mean, they don't know how to use their money to the maximum benefit ?

A. Yes.

Q. Supposing they spend half a lakh of rupees on a film, would they be able to get their capital back within six months?

A. Possibly not, they may take about a year to realise their capital investment.

- Q. Do you know how many theatres there are in India, cinema theatres, I mean?
A. About 350.
- Q. Do you think, if you improve the quality of Indian films, you will have a wider market abroad? Do you think a well made Indian film will have a good audience if shown in England?
A. Not the present ones produced in India, but well made ones may command a good audience. I have exhibited some of my own films in London, such as "Savitri", "Harischandra", and other films, and the press in London remarked, "From the technical point of view, Phalke's films are excellent."
- Q. Why did you not try to market your films there if they were found attractive ?
A. I had not sufficient working capital with me to do so. As a matter of fact, there was a big demand for my films. They asked for 25-30 copies of the same. It was then that I formed the Hindustan Film Company.
- Q. Do you think, if you can get sufficient capital, you can produce films in India which can command an international market?
A. Yes, I do think so.
- Q. If you borrow money at a higher rate of interest, then it will not be paying?
A. In spite of it, I think, it will be paying.
- Q. Do you think it will be a good idea to have a joint effort by an English and an Indian film company to make Indian films, and distribute them abroad as well as in India?
A. Yes, it is desirable.
- Q. Is it practicable?
A. I think it is.
- Q. Who actually distributed your films?
A. I did it myself.
- Q. Did you send your men all over India to market your films?
A. Yes, in the beginning, but now exhibitors come to me.
- Q. Your company has no other branches, I suppose?
A. Yes, our chief office is at Bombay, then we have branches at Calcutta and Madras.
- Q. But you have no agents in other parts of India?
A. Yes, there are some.
- Q. You said you sent your films to Singapore. Did you have success there?
A. Yes, it was a success. We have sent films to Singapore, Rangoon, and other places.

- Q. Have you ever tried to send your films to East Africa?
A. Yes we have sent some of our films to Zanzihar.
- Q. You said you have formed a company. Is it a limited company?
A. It is a partnership business.
- Q. May I know the capital of the firm?
A. Three lakhs of rupees.
- Q. What capital do you think would be necessary to start an up-to-date, first-rate film producing concern?
A. Not more than three lakhs is required.
- Q. Even for producing films which may have an international market?
A. Then we may have five lakhs of rupees.
- Q. Do you keep a permanent staff of actors and actresses at Nasik?
A. Yes, we have a permanent staff.
- Q. How many?
A. About 100 permanent people. Exactly 95.
- Q. Don't you have to take the help of some outside amateur actor or actress?
A. Never.
- Q. How many photographers and directors have you got in your establishment?
A. Three photographs, and three or four directors.
- Q. Where did they get their training?
A. I myself trained them.
- Q. I noticed some girls and boys. Do you have girls also?
A. Yes, there are, of course, a certain number of girls. At present, there are, on the rolls, 14 girls
- Q. Are all of them permanently employed?
A. Yes.
- Q. How many pictures do you generally turn out a year?
A. Say, a picture a month. I, myself, don't liek this idea, but we produce one a month. I would be satisfied with three or four, of course, the best, a year.

Q. Have you consulted any showmen, that is to say, any managers for the existing cinema shows, for exhibiting of educational films?

A. They are ready to have my films as side films. All die theatre proprietors are willing to take my subjects.

Q. Have you produced any film at all?

A. I produced "Talegaon Glass Factory", and other such industrial films about 6 years ago. They were popular at the time. Now, the producers run after long subjects of 7,000 - 8,000 feet. Nobody caares for such small subjects, though they might be useful, and paying. Even if they are worthless subjects, they will go atter long films. Small films must pay. They will be paying even in big towns, as well as small villages.

Q. How do you keep in touch with all the latest developments since 1914, when you went to England?

A. I have, of course, taken advantage of these developments.

Q. How do you get them? Do you read books, or how?

A. I am a subscriber to two or three film magazines ("Moving Pictures", "The Bioscope", &c.).

Q. Your firm's headquarters are at Nasik?

A. We have our studio at Nasik, and the office is at Bombay.

Q. How many producers are there at Nasik?

A. Only one, and that is myself

Q. Why did you go to Nasik?

A. Because the ciimaie there is most suitable for photography, there are oriental jungles, historical places, and rivers

Q. Could you produce enough electricity for are lights?

A. I make them myself I have two engines, and two dynamos.

Q. Do you ever use are lights?

A. Yes

Q. This is the point I wanted to get Can you produce enough electiricity if you want?

A. No. We have only a machine of 5h.p., and another of 12h.p.. To produce enough electricity for this purpose requires machines of 30 - 40h.p., at least

Q. May I ask what capital you started with?

A. Rs. 15,000.

Q. And how has the capital grown to three lakhs?

A. I had to ask my friends.

Q. In the course of your existence as a film producing company, have you amalgamated with any other company?

A. No.

Q. Have you ever made any proposal for amalgamating?

A. Yes, but nobody would hear of them

Q. Why not?

A. I don't know. I asked Mr. Palankar, who is working at Bombay, I also asked Mr. Baburao Painter, from Kolhapur. But they would not amalgamate.

Q. Do you think it would be a good thing if a number of the present film producing companies were amalgamated?

A. Yes.

Q. What are the advantages that would follow the adoption of such a course?

A. There will be more than sufficient capital with them. Then, there will be amalgamation of different ideas, different actors, &c. I. may have two or three first-rate actors, and another man may similarly have a few. If all are amalgamated, we shall have a dozen or so first class actors, actresses, &c.

Q. What is the amount that one can spend on one film, with a reasonable hope of getting back an adequate return?

A. Not more than Rs. 25,000 per project.

Q. Is there not a question of having to use a good deal of money in payment to first class actors and actresses, and for improved scenes?

A. No, I don't think so. With a capital of Rs. 25,000 I can produce a first class film.

Q. You can get a profit also?

A. Yes.

Q. If you are going to spend a lakh on a film, you would not get a profit?

A. No.

Q. What is the reason for that?

A. Because we have only the Indian market for our films.

Q. Therefore, your point is that the present Indian Market is too small?

A. Yes.

- Q. What steps can we take to improve India's market?
A. If we produce certain films that will be appreciated in foreign countries, they can create a good market there. There is the possibility of getting more money on a film for the sake of novelty, or for the sake of knowing India, and the Indian Character, and also the romance.
- Q. For a town of which size would you recommend a theatre?
A. There should be one cinema for a population of, say, from 15,000 to 20,000.
- Q. How much money would you hope to get out of the 20,000?
A. There will be no loss, at any rate.
- Q. Do you think you can get Rs. 1,500 per month with a population of only 20,000?
A. I don't think so. It will be something less.
- Q. In that case, you will have to count at least Rs. 50 a day?
A. Yes, but we have to pay at least Rs. 40 a day for the film. Rs. 40 is the minimum charge.
- Q. I am just trying to find out what you can get from a population of 20,000?
A. We can get about Rs. 1,000 a month, and I think that is the highest figure. We must get at least 50% more i.e. over what we pay.
- Q. What do you think of the Bombay Board of Censors? Do you think they should be a better constituted body?
A. Yes.
- Q. What do you suggest for that?
A. We must have a Board knowing something of the inside of the industry.
- Q. You think the government ought to help this industry?
A. Yes, I think they ought to.
- Q. In what way?
A. That is the difficulty. I think they can give loans under certain conditions.
- Q. They can also adopt some protective measures?
A. Yes; also, cancel duties, or reduce them.
- Q. What guarantee do you think the government can get from the industry if it advanced money?
A. I cannot tell you that just now.
- Q. Is there any other kind of duty that you want taken away or reduced?
A. Duty on chemicals and raw film may be reduced.
- Q. Have you seen film posters and advertisements?
A. Yes.

Q. Do you think there is any harm in them? Should they be censored?

A. Only the embracing scenes, or love scenes should be censored, I think.

Q. Should there be any separate children's performances?

A. Yes.

Q. You think the films are injurious to the children?

A. Only certain films, not all.

Q. Should boys and girls under ten be prohibited from seeing these films?

A. Yes, in the case of certain films.

Q. Would there be any danger in filming the Battle of Panipat?

A. I don't think there would be any harm in that.

Q. The Maharattas were defeated there, and so they won't like that?

A. Yes, but sometimes the Malirattas may be defeated, and sometimes the Mohammedans. But in the case of the Battle of Panipat, of course, the Malirattas will not like it.

Q. So there is some danger in producing such films?

A. I don't think so. Practically, there is no danger. There may be some sentimental objection.

Q. Do you think they will insist on stopping that film?

A. I don't think so. They will see the film, and simply go away saying that it is not good.

Q. Do you think it would be better to censor the scenarios and stories in order to avoid some people objecting to one kind of film, or another?

A. That is not desirable. The film should be examined by the Board, that is all.

Q. Just another point. You referred to the fact that kissing scenes should be cut. Will the pictures be popular if such scenes are cut out?

A. There will be other scenes in the picture which will be popular.

Q. But if you show on the screen anything which is peculiar, the man on the street will say. "Trash"; we don't do that?

A. I, myself have no objection to such scenes. I am used to foreign people and their customs. I, therefore, see nothing in this kissing; but when children and adolescents see such scenes, they will get a bad impression.

Q. I don't suggest that you should make an Indian love-scene in the Western method; it would not be true to Indian love-making?

A. Yes. We never kiss in public; we do it in private. People will never like that to be depicted on the screen.

LADIES FROM CULTURED FAMILIES FOR ACTING

IN FILMS - A TALK 1930 ?

"To talk about feminine characters in films, it is good if we have female artistes to play them. And it is still better if ladies from cultured families do it.

I have come to this conclusion after seeing hundreds of dramas and films, and after having spent two decades in these professions. In fact, even Sanskrit poetry, drama, and dramaturgy support this view.

It is not today that I hold this opinion. It is well known that in my films "Kaliya Mardan" and "Shi Krishna Janma", &c, I got my five year old daughter to play these roles. Of course, at that time, my daughter was a small girl. Yet, once, when I faced difficulties, I even encouraged my wife to act in films. I was to play King Shriyal, my wife was to portray Changuna, and my eldest son was to act prince Chilaya.

Brethren! Doesn't it hurt you when the characters of Seeta and Draupadi are portrayed on the screen with vulgar gestures, fluttering eyes, semi-bare breasts, and swinging hips? Doesn't it enrage you? Can you tolerate others laughing at these travesties of our ideal women?

I feel it would be good if such type of actresses vanish from our studios

Frankly, it would be welcome if some rich playboy lured them away from our studios by offering them thrice of what we can pay. At present, they are swarming all over the studios.

By God's grace, if these vamps are replaced by a few from good families, the whole atmosphere in the film studio will entirely change, and the black spot of its being compared to brothels will be completely wiped off

From many sides it will also put a stop to the degradation of the employers and the employees. The inborn cultured behaviour, and the glow of marital bliss, these ladies would emanate will automatically give a halo to the characters they portray, and the glow will ultimately pervade the atmosphere in and around the studios.

Initially, the ladies will not agree to putting a cheap dance in any beautiful drama they would participate in. If at all, because a play is a truthful reproduction of life, one has to include a dance, it would be so clean and pure that one will not be compelled to watch the vulgarity of swinging hips, skirts flying thigh high, and bare breasts bobbing up and down in rhythm with the tune.

I am sure that these plays would have so clean an atmosphere, so clean an atmosphere, so beautiful a language, that it would not be embarrassing for the father and mother, the mother and the daughter or daughter-in-law, to enjoy it together.

I wanted an actress to portray Seeta in my film "Setu Bandhan". I was faced with two dozen cuties. It took me an hour to make one understand the character. After I have given a long discourse this would be Seeta tells me, "Don't worry, I'll play the role fine. But, will you give me the best zari clothes to wear?" The poor son did not know what hardships one entails when sent to the forest for suffering (Rama and Seeta complete paupers, with tree leaves and animal skin for cover). Further, this ignorant girl says, "I have a sister. Shall I bring her to you? She can ride a horse, climb trees, and swims well. She can play Hanuman's wife." (In fact, Hanuman, the most devoted follower of Rama, was a bachelor all his life.) I just kept quiet, and dismissed her. Then came another jewel of a sweetie. To give her an idea how ladies from good families sit, adjust their "pallav", I had myself to act like a lady suffering the separation from her husband, but nothing could be seen from her face. Perhaps her dictionary lacked words like separation, the resultant loss or sorrow.

After experiencing such cheap models, I became sure in my mind that to portray such a noble character like Seeta, I must have a lady from a noble family. Please do not be under the wrong impression that any woman may become an actress. If it was so, one can, without much expense, stage "Pratima Swayamwar" with the help of women from Bhuleshwar Market. To become an actress one should be blessed with many factors, and the primary asset is beauty. And by that I mean real beauty. Truthful beauty and unreal beauty; now, this is new. Yet, there is nothing new in this thought. It is only a question of looking through the right type of glasses.

The feeling of beauty is so tummy, that each individual feels that he or she is beautiful. If this was not have been full of mirrors. Nobody feels happy without a mirror. One can observe the fun at a naan shop. Once the mouth is red with paan, everyone looks into the mirror and only then goes his way, as if he is Cupid incarnate.

Actually, beauty is God's gift. Beauty is neither love, nor a feeling of belonging. A Sanskrit saying, which literally means that even an ass who comes of age looks attractive, only proves that the throbbing youth or a girl of that age is also a type of beauty. Yet, the inability to spot beauty is like the inability to know one's own faults or failings. That is beauty, appreciated by millions of eyes.

Next to beauty, one should have a shapely figure. Attractiveness should be supplemented by a well-proportioned body.

In addition to these two, the third necessary need is the inborn understanding of drama. Then come the ability to face an audience, a sweet voice, enchanting way of speech, all hurdles which one must overcome.

It is not easy for a cultured lady to acquire all this, and capture the stage. Of course, this applies to the virtuous artiste who has an ideal before her.

The moment these virtuous ladies enter the profession, the chaotic atmosphere in the studios must change. If, unfortunately, this does not happen, and these wolves continue molesting them, I would request my professional sisters that their own look should scare these scoundrels like an electric shock, and they must beat it. If even this does not suffice, keep a small, sharp instrument always with you, and be bold to use it in an emergency, to teach these people the lesson of their lifetime."

"ARTICLE IN "KALA BHUVAN MaGAZINE" - 1936

"Forty years ago, I was a student of Kala Bhuvan, when Professor Gujjar was the principal.

Being pleased with my works in drawing, painting, photography, and modelling, Prof Gajjar not only gave me a scholarship but was kind enough to allow me free use of Kala Bhuvan laboratory and studio. And I think I made the best use of this noble opportunity.

The product of such facilities and the knowledge I gained in Kala Bhuvan was "Phalke's Photo-engraving and Photo-printing works". The work of this firm was highly appreciated even by foreigners. Mr. W. Ray was the only other person to have a studio of this sort in India at the time. Afterwards, my studio was turned into "Laxmi Printing Works", with a big investment from a rich gentleman.

I now have another business in enamelling, photoceramics, enamel transfer, art pottery, &c Let me tell you, my young Kala Bhuvamans, the primary but the essential facts which led me to further study. These are the instruction and experience which I got during my stay at Kala Bhuvan.

The daring first step that I had taken in the film industry, not only in India but in the whole of Asia, brought me fame. The film was screened in England, and the compliments I received were as, "From the technical point of view, Mr. Phalke's films are surprisingly excellent. We wish Mr. Phalke had been born here somewhere in England."

Baroda was the place where I could get the technical and fundamental appliances for film production. Very few people would have made such good use of Shri Sayaji Library as I did during my stay in Baroda. The great Marathi dramatist, Mr. Shankar Moro Ranade, was my preceptor in the dramatic art. The inquisitive and far-reaching eye of the late Babasaheb (Mr. Ranade) marked out my genius as a poet and an actor, and he developed my merits with keen interest. The work of the director of the "Veni Sanhar" drama, performed by the Baroda College, had naturally fallen to my lot. Since then, I have written many small poems, and I have given a kirtan before an audience of 400 to 500 people. I had a sweet melodious voice, and received full scientific instruction in the Maulabux Musical School of Baroda. I had some interest in magic also. The late Sardar Bhausaheb Majumdar had a great liking for these arts.

The pursuit of these arts did cause a gap of some years in my study of photography. My magical feats were, however, highly appreciated by all, and I used to perform them in the presence of thousands of spectators. Prof Gajjar was so pleased with my magical feats that he made me perform them before some German professor. The German professors were greatly surprised by them. I had, however, never intended to be Prof Phalke the Magician, and soon returned to my original work.

In short, Baroda, the capital of H.H. Gaikwad, helped me to develop all the qualities needed to be a successful film producer. And I owe my present prosperity to my stay in Baroda, and to its technical institute, Kala Bhavan.

Mr. Causin, the then superintendent of the Archeological Survey Department of India my work, and tried to take me in his department. This shows the extent to which I V old architecture and ancient history. I am now old, and have just crossed my 66th ye. stout and strong, and can still walk 5 to 6 miles a day without any trouble. Thrice I visited and yet am proud to say that I never have taken tea, or smoked a cigarette It will not *m-* out of pi. to state here that the health and long life I am enjoying is due to the good habits I have cultivated. It is my humble suggestion of my Kala Bhuvan brothers to keep themselves aloof from harmful habits

The success and the prosperity in my undertaking in film production and other arts are due to the Kala Bhuvan of H,H Sir Sayajirao Gaikwad. I have already mentioned this many times in my lectures and writings. And I am glad to mention it once mere today. I wish a long life to His Highness, and to the Kala Bhuvan."

PIONEER'S PARTING ADVICE - 1940 Film

News, Madras, 23 July, 1940

i am happy to find that the Indian cinema industry, a highly promising one indeed, has come to stay.

Of course, in its initial stages, I have rendered my quota of humble service in its onward march, as an ardent devotee in the sacred shrine of Mother Art.

But, I sincerely regard that, owing to apparent reasons, the industry is not taking the healthy course which it ought to.

As i have said time and again, (he present methods of film production do not augur well.

In the present circumstances, I would suggest to the producers to give up for good these inornately long feature films, ana direct their pointed attention to producing shorter films, say 7000 or 8.000 feet long, and include in the programme an educational short, one reel of healthy comedy, a reel of some short theme which requires illustration and illusions, magic, one reel of travelogue, &c. Such a programme will be entertaining and educative. If only our producers make the industry move in the; right direction, there is hope of its expansion and healthy growth.

The craze of the recruitment of fabulously paid "stars", and the inclusion of too many songs and lengthy dialogues should also be put an end to. In histrionic value, these films fall much below the, standard. Cinema is an educational preacher, and as such the themes should be sound. These indecorous and highly irritating comic interludes that have no bearing on the story and which we find to our abundance in our Indian films should also be severely eschewed by our directors and producers.