CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, NORTHRIDGE

THE PROBLEMS OF
THE FILM INDUSTRY IN THAILAND

A thesis submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Mass Communication

by

Prachan Pimpan

May, 1975
The thesis of Prachan Pimpan is approved:

California State University, Northridge

May, 1975
DEDICATION

To my wife for her warmth, loving generosity and understanding; and to my loving daughter, Vimolwan, for her inspiration.
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ABSTRACT

THE PROBLEMS OF
THE FILM INDUSTRY IN THAILAND

by

Prachan Pimpan

Master of Arts in Mass Communication

May, 1975

There has been an attempt to increase the motion picture business in Thailand in the last decade. However, the Thai film industry has been slow in keeping up with the motion picture industries in other parts of the world. The number of theatres, for example, in proportion to the population and the films produced in the country, is very small. Popularity of foreign films in the country creates a tendency to imitate them and arrests the growth of originality. The public, at the moment, has an inaccurate impression of the industry, and the industry has made no efforts to correct these impressions. Most of the film critics in the country can aptly be described as good mothers who cannot see the faults of their own children. They do not make a positive contribution to the progress of the industry and accordingly the motion picture industry
in Thailand is young and still unstable.

This thesis is an attempt to explain various problems relating to the low growth rate of the film industry, as well as to introduce possibilities for improvement. These problems constitute an important obstacle to the economic and social development of Thailand.

The proposal introduced in this study will be submitted to the Committee of the Thai government which will determine its effectiveness in developing the film industry. However, this study will be considered as tentative, subject to revision depending upon the needs and resources of the Thai government.
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The motion picture industry has developed within the last seventy-five years and, today, its scope and interests cover the whole world. A study into the problems of the motion picture industry of various countries has shown that the rapid development of this industry all over the world has been due to an awareness of the fantastic potentialities of motion pictures (30:67).

Motion pictures are a dominant form of expression. They have not only proved themselves a source of entertainment but also a potential social and national force as well (19:120).

In Thailand, motion pictures are a popular art. The influence of the movies touches the lives of forty million Thai people who sit in the audience and, likewise, extends into remote corners of the world.

Today thousands of Thai people are discovering opportunities in the various fields of motion picture production. In 1970, more than a third of all Thai films in production were being shot by independent units. In 1971,
alone, more than one hundred independent companies were founded (45:12). This indicated that the industry had been quick to accept new ideas and technological improvements; whether in sound, in color, or in some other process.

The increase in foreign-made films in the country has brought about changing cultural and economic patterns. The economy, for example, which moves towards more diversification, creates a more complicated system of work and requires new types of skills and social attitudes (6:18).

The education system still does not offer film-making courses adequately geared to student's aptitudes, interests, and abilities. This gives rise to frustration, conflicts and feelings of failure on the part of people. Political changes which lead to a misunderstanding of the concept of democracy may be regarded as another serious education problem which needs correction and clarification (6:32).

The existing problems of the industry have provoked some enthusiasm and even alarm the motion picture producers despite mounting progress by them in every field of their vocation.

The author discovered that the problems of this industry have remained scientifically unexplored. It still is a wide field of study and, therefore, the author took
this subject "The Film Industry in Thailand" for his re- 
search project. The main objective was to understand the 
various problems connected with this industry, and study 
and analyze them in a scientific manner.

The obstacle in making a detailed study of Thai film 
industry has been the problem of making selections from 
unorganized data, which the author had to categorize and 
analyze to make an objective study and give the conclusions 
and recommendations. The analysis may not cover the total 
problems of Thai film industry. However, the author's 
objective is not to lay down a definite detailed operating 
policy, but only to indicate some of the general considera-
tions necessary for the foundation of a sound and lasting 
policy.

The author has, therefore, confined this study to 
the following: growth of the film industry, general prob-
lems of production, employment, finances, costs, profits, 
marketing of films, distribution, exhibition, government, 
and the motion picture industry.

The unit of currency used throughout this study is the 
Baht (20 Baht = $1.00 American money).

The concluding chapter concerns some recommendations 
for further improvement of the industry.
Statement of the Problem

Great efforts to solve existing industry problems of the country have been made by the Thai government and several organizations in Thailand. There have been several stigmas attached to the Thai film industry from the beginning for the following reasons: First, the producing units are too many and too small, therefore, uneconomical. Second, profits in the industry are the most indeterminate, most variable and most uncertain of all income streams. Third, a number of poor quality films are being produced. Fourth, problems of financing, distribution and exhibition have created many problems for the film industry. All are related to the personnel in the various branches of the motion picture business who do not have proper knowledge with respect to film production.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore film industry in Thailand by recognizing the problems from the past and current conditions that have had an impact on the present motion picture industry. The study aim is threefold. First, an attempt is made to contribute to the general economic growth of Thailand. Second, the study attempts to provide the people of other countries in general, and of
Thailand in particular, with a comprehensive description and analysis of the industrial problems in an open dualistic economy using Thailand as a prime example. Third, the study endeavors to provide the development planner in the field with specific and pragmatic suggestions for the improvement of the film industry in Thailand.

Limitation of the Study

This study, an analysis of the film industry's problems, is based on fact, theory, international references and personal experiences. The difficulty lay in acquiring the necessary data directly from Thailand. This study is limited by the amount of available data. However, the author considers the difficulty not extensive because he was able to acquire supplementary data here in the United States.
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Physical Setting of Thailand

Thailand, originally known as Siam, had its name changed in 1850 to Siam, and changed again to Thailand in 1949 (16:7).

Thailand is bounded on the north and west by Burma, on the northeast and east by Laos and Cambodia, and the south by Malaysia. Thailand is warm and rather humid (16:8).

Thailand is 1,000 miles long from north to south, and 500 miles wide from east to west. In area, it is 198,000 square miles, which is slightly larger than the State of California (7:7).

The northeast portion of the country is hilly, dry and economically poor. The southern or peninsular part is sandy, mountainous, and rich; the central area is a plain (5:2).

Political Characteristics

Thailand is unique among the countries of Southeast
Asia in that it has never been a European Colony (5:21).

The King of Thailand is a constitutional monarch. He exercises his legislative power through the National Assembly and his executive power through the Council of Ministers, which must have the confidence of the National Assembly.

Thailand has been divided into provinces, each headed by a governor appointed by the Ministry of Interior. Each province is divided into districts, each headed by a district commission. Below the district level there are locally elected officials. Each district is divided into communes headed by a commune headman, and each commune is divided into hamlets headed by a hamlet headman (4:190).

In 1970, the country was divided into 71 provinces, 528 districts, 4,961 communes, and 42,021 hamlets or villages. Each province contains an average of five to ten districts, each district contains six to ten communes, and each commune contains twelve to twenty hamlets (16:182).

Population

The population of Thailand in mid-1971 was estimated to have reached 37,399,000. The birth rate is approximately 3 per cent per year, among the highest in the world. There are approximately 16,377,000 children under age 15.
The percentage of population residing in rural areas is eighty-five per cent (42:3). Jean-Pichat (21:20) reported a population census in 1970 which is shown in Table 1.

**TABLE 1**

NUMBER IN THE POPULATION AND POPULATION GROWTH RATES, 1911-1970

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year of Census</th>
<th>Number in Population</th>
<th>Rate of Population Growth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>8,266,408</td>
<td>13.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1919</td>
<td>9,207,355</td>
<td>13.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1929</td>
<td>11,506,207</td>
<td>21.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1937</td>
<td>14,464,105</td>
<td>29.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1947</td>
<td>17,442,689</td>
<td>18.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>26,257,916</td>
<td>32.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>34,152,000</td>
<td>26.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


If this rate continues, there will be a doubling of the population in twenty-one years to over seventy million (42:7).

**Education**

According to recent reports in 1970, 70 per cent of the population is literate (16:109). This figure, however,
is somewhat deceptive. Many of the people, especially those who live in the rural areas, will go to school up to grade four, but after that, they go to work in the fields, so they have little opportunity to use their reading and writing skills and become illiterate (9:3).

Economics

The economic base of Thailand is primarily agricultural. Rice is the most important economic product. In the rural area, 80 per cent of the people are in the agricultural field with an average annual income of 4,834 Baht (U.S. $247) per capita, which is about 400 Baht (U.S. $20) a month, and in some regions, especially in the northeast, this income is low. The average income of the people in rural areas would be about 200 Baht (U.S. $10) per month (25:9).

As Table 2 shows, Gross Domestic Product increased at an annual rate of 7.9 per cent in the period 1962-1967.

The film industry, even though increasing far more slowly than the other segments of the economy, still accounts for almost a fourth of the national income.

For the past ten years the Thai economy has made remarkable progress; the society has achieved an internal economic equilibrium in which development could proceed at
TABLE 2
GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT BY INDUSTRIAL ORIGIN, 1962-1967

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>22.7</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>26.4</td>
<td>27.1</td>
<td>27.4</td>
<td>29.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>12.7</td>
<td>14.8</td>
<td>15.9</td>
<td>16.8</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>12.3</td>
<td>13.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Film Industry</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>7.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Services</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>8.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


A rapid pace. At present, however, it appears that a variety of factors, some inherent to the economy and some external, could seriously upset the equilibrium and threaten the continued growth.

Factors in the Development of the Film Industry

There are many factors in the development of the Thai film industry:

1. A trend away from isolationism involving Thai interest in many foreign things.
2. The present increased interest in foreign films has also created a broader interest in foreign customs and practices.

3. For good or ill Thailand's involvement in worldwide economic, political and military activities has brought thousands of Thai citizens into contact with foreign countries.

4. Certain economic factors also cause an unusual interest in films.

**Historical Development**

Shadow plays were common in Thailand centuries ago, but the motion picture came from the west and provided a happy blending of the dramatic and photographs arts that has challenged the Thai film industry as it attempts to keep up with world motion picture production.

The achievement in making the first Thai feature films did not come until 1930, when a film *The Farmer* was produced by a group of artists who started Thailand's first film industry in 1925 (35:5). This film was silent and produced on 16 mm. black and white. It was based on the life of the farm girl who left her home to seek fun and fortune in the city. The film touched the mood of the people at the time. It was a good achievement because
The Farmer was the first feature film and changed the shadow plays era into a moving picture.

From 1930 to 1940, about twenty producing film companies came into existence. By 1945, only ten concerns were still in existence and out of these only four concerns were maintaining a steady output of pictures. During the time, only one company had an average annual output of two to three feature films (36:10). The total number of feature films produced in the country, however, was on the increase every year.

More studios came into existence in about 1935 when artificial light began to be widely used for making motion pictures (35:18). The period from 1935 to 1940 was one of the transition. Although British talkie films were shown in the country at the Charem Thai theater in Bangkok, Thailand (23:11), the talkie era in Thailand film did not start until 1950, when the first Thai feature film Santi Vena was released at the Charem Krong theater (23:19). The introduction of sound film became common all over the country by the end of 1950, and silent films were neither produced nor imported after this.

Theatres also were established rapidly during these years. The total number of theatres existing in the country was forty in 1935, fifty in 1950 and seventy in
1960 (24:50). These theatres, however, were not sufficient in number for the increasing theatre audience of that time.

In 1940 to 1950 film journalism started devoting special columns to film news and reviews. This growth of film journalism helped the film industry to establish a direct link with the public on the one hand and the government on the other.

From 1942 to 1945, World War II spread to Thailand's soil and film production slowed down because of the country's shortage of raw materials. There was a fall in film production of 65 per cent by the end of 1945 (43:103). Also, the exhibitors, in many cases, found it difficult to run the films due to heavy taxation. The increased taxation, on the other hand, created the practice of changing receipts and payments to make it appear as though the industry was in the 'black' to avoid the payment of the taxes and this practice is still effective today.

The period from 1946 to 1950 was one of change, trouble and adjustments. The production side showed an upward trend in film production. Cost of production of films further increased, while the returns to producers remained stationary in spite of increased box-office collections. The slump existing in these years in the country did not spare the film industry and, as a result, many
of the films proved flops at the box-office. Financiers became shy, the salaries of the film stars and production crews went down. All these led to a sad phase in the film industry at that time (35:100).

The period of 1951 to 1960 was one of increase in the film industry. Film was a thing of excitement for the public. Many of the feature films produced in this period were of better quality than had been usual in the past. Many of the films fared well in international film festivals and promoted cultural understanding. Foreign exchange earnings from the export of films also showed an increase. The industry tried several techniques in film production with success. The Thai government showed special interest in the affairs of the industry. The Motion Picture Organizations also came into existence to bring a healthy trend in film productions and to mold public opinion for better appreciation of film art.

The great success and the increasing popularity of the motion pictures led the government to pass the Thai Motion Picture Act of 1950 (26:38), the most important act affecting the film industry till today. This Act provided for: (1) the regulation of motion picture exhibitions, (2) examining and certifying films as suitable for public exhibition and (3) carrying out the general provisions of
the Act (26:26). At this time, the entertainment tax was also introduced.

The Thai film industry at the moment ranks fourth in respect to capital investment, fifth in respect to the amount of wages paid, and tenth in respect to the number of people employed in the total industrial sector of the country (8:31). It ranks fourth in the production of feature films compared to other Asian nations (10:2).

The Thai film industry, though it has remained in a continuous process of development, has also faced many unfavorable circumstances. The state of the film industry cannot be judged by its external appearance or output. What is decisive is the solidarity of internal conditions. From the pages that follow it will be clear that Thai film industry is indeed lacking in many aspects.

In this brief history an attempt has been made to show how the Thai film industry can be made responsive to the aspirations and goals of the Thai government and people.

Objective of National Program

After having considered the overall problems of the industry, a national program was created within the Ministry of Industry with the following objectives:
1. Seeking a new market for Thai films.
2. Providing an opportunity to all filmmakers from abroad who would like to come in and make films in the country.
3. Opening exhibitions or competition to all filmmakers and seeking the best pictures to be used for further competition in foreign lands.
4. Investigating what people really want to see in films.
5. Seeking new stars and training them to become good actors in a professional manner.
6. Opening film schools or on-the-job training to teach the techniques of writing, directing, budgeting, etc.
7. Cutting import taxes on raw materials and equipment.
8. Making film services readily available throughout the country.


The Thai Producers' Organization

In 1965, a new National Scheme of the Thai Producers' Organization came into being. It put particular stress upon meeting the needs of the individual and society. It
reaffirmed the goals of the previous organization (established in 1950) to preserve the heritage and advance the art of film in Thailand (11:14).

Thai's organization can be understood from Figure 1. Basically the Producers' Organization is composed of one main office and several smaller departments.

Figure 1
Thai Producers' Organization

- Producers
  - Asian Film Dept.
  - Film Institute
  - Directors
  - Writers
  - Actors
  - Cameramen
  - Artists
  - Editors
  - Distributor
  - Exhibitor
The basic responsibilities of the organization consist in meeting the professional needs of the filmmakers. The specialized professional staffs of the separate departments are organized to provide the technical services required in the planning of innovations, record collection and analysis. The other function is to provide the educational leadership and business management necessary for the filmmaker members. The Thai Producers' Organization is directly supported by the Ministry of Industry and the National Chamber of Commerce of Thailand (11:19).

The Film Institute is responsible for assisting the Thai Producers' Organization in educational planning. The chief responsibility of this department is to develop and promote film education to prepare young people to work in a professional manner. The Film Institute, created within the Thai Producers' Organization, cooperates with other government agencies and professional groups in establishing film education programs. It is also responsible for counseling prospective personnel and assisting people in job placement (45:20).

An Asian Film Department also exists within the organization. The main responsibility of the department is to provide the most suitable information in the country and
from other countries. The customary functions of budget preparation, contractual arrangements, legal matters, the gathering of statistical data, all these are provided by this department.
CHAPTER III

CURRENT PROBLEMS OF THE FILM INDUSTRY

General Consideration

The film industry of Thailand is said to be in a momentary crisis. The existing problems that confront the industry are both internal and external. Among the internal problems, the most important is the production setup.

Among the other problems of the film industry is that Thai films are ordinarily lengthier than those shown in other countries of the world. Lengthy movies are due to poor writing and editing of scripts which lead to low quality films.

Uncertain political and economic tendencies in the country create further difficulties in the working and progress of the industry. Adding to the difficulties is the rapid growth of the new producers. Besides, foreign pictures are allowed free competition with Thai films and are taking over the motion picture markets in the country. Yet, these all have led to an intensified qualitative as
well as quantitative competition in the industry. As a result, many pictures are 'carbon copies' of the successful foreign films (3:21), which hinders the artistic growth of the industry.

Thai culture also has been an obstacle to the film industry's growth. The customs, food, clothing, and even the language are different from other countries. All these factors, therefore, forced the producers to cater only to the domestic market for a long time. Thai pictures could not get a suitable market or appreciation outside the country.

Problem of Motion Picture Organization

The main factors are easily apparent in appraising the failure of the motion picture organization. The first is a lamentable one. It is the ludicrous weakness of the members of the organization, which compels them to think in terms of the first person singular, and never in plural numbers (3:28). The second is the desire not to work for the common cause and to feel that someone else from outside will rescue them from their mistakes.

Rarely are persons found in the Thai motion picture industry who are interested in the activities of the organization (which actually just exists only in name). Very seldom does the organization take up the issues raised
by their members and seldom does it help the members to recover their unpaid salaries from the producers. The members, too, take little interest in going to the meetings of the organizations, and even if they attend, they do not take the agenda seriously.

**Producer**

The producer fulfills the role of a captain in the production team and has been described as: "The producer of a motion picture is the person who governs its creation from the time of its conception until it is ready for showing in the theatre (Numbere:2).

The producer in Thailand is the person who arranges for the finances required for the film production. Anyone who can manage to procure some financial backing can become a producer, and cases are not rare in which film stars, cameramen, writers, distributors, singers, etc. become producers. They very seldom know the business side of film production and most of them contribute to the increase in poor quality films.

The Thai producers find themselves in a vexing dilemma, which arises out of the rather stubborn fact that the majority of the producers still do not know how to plan despite almost twenty-five years of failure. Without ade-
quate experience and knowledge, they try to employ reason alone to achieve impossible things which ultimately force them into bankruptcy and disillusionment.

The production of motion pictures started in Bangkok and later found its way into many areas in the north, east and south of the country. There has been a gradual growth of studies in the country. In 1950, 1955, 1958 and 1960, the number of studios was 10, 20, 33 and 45 respectively (45:80).

The makers of films in Thailand are divided into three groups:

The first group consists of people who have money, experience and know what they are doing in the motion picture business. Most of this group have the finest and latest equipment, complete shooting stages and large studio facilities (6:32).

The second group consists of artists themselves, such as producers, directors, writers, distributors, actors, and some singers. This group usually loves the business, and make good pictures, though sometimes they lose a great deal of money from the result of their works, but they still continue to produce film (6:36).

The third group, quite a large group, are known as amateur filmmakers. This group has no experience or
knowledge of what the film maker should do. They do what they think is right, employing no practical techniques whatsoever. This group has made the Thai standard of film making very poor (6:40).

The motion picture industry in the country is mainly governed by the Motion Picture Act of 1950, as amended in 1960, and the rules made thereunder (26:32).

The rules require all motion pictures producers to have a license to operate their business. In order to get a license one must show a "warranty" of the business they intend to do. This warranty must be written in terms of a statement which includes: financial investment, number of pictures one intends to make during a year, and the kind of equipment one owns (26:48). There is no doubt that many Thai producers are unable to meet this warranty and, therefore, they operate illegally without a license.

The number of studios registered by the government is shown in Table 3.

In 1950, according to the Bureau of Census, there were ten establishments (studios) producing motion pictures in the country. Such of these production units as were engaged in making pictures for the theatrical trade appear to have been operated by seven companies. According to the
TABLE 3
AN ESTIMATE OF INVESTED CAPITAL CLASSIFIED BY COMPANIES, 1960

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company</th>
<th>Total Investment (million baht)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Asawin Film Production Co.</td>
<td>6,000,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Siam Patana Co. Ltd.</td>
<td>2,000,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Wisanu Studio</td>
<td>1,000,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Sri-Krong Film Production Co.</td>
<td>2,000,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Suriya Studio</td>
<td>1,000,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Ravoh Film Production Co.</td>
<td>9,000,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Hanuman Film Production Co.</td>
<td>6,000,000.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Thai Star magazine, these seven companies in 1950 have made a total of fifteen "features" and forty-five "shorts" (comedies, educational and science films) (45:101).

Table 4 indicates the total number of films produced by the Thai filmmakers in the country.

The Director

Directors in Thailand work both on their own productions and for others, either on a contract (if any) basis,
TABLE 4
TOTAL FILM PRODUCTION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total Films</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1962</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1963</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1964</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1967</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1968</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1969</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


on a monthly salary or on a percentage basis in profits. Their function varies in each case depending on the agreed terms.

In the larger studio productions, the Director is responsible for confining his sets and his cast within certain limits and for completing the shooting within a given time schedule. In contrast, when he works with a small
company, he will act as producer, director and unit manager all in one. He must draft his own schedule, make all calls and arrangements and, most important, he must be personally responsible for producing the film for a given amount of money (37:15). The budget is often small, so he must know what constitutes the major expenditures and do everything possible for each individual production.

Strictly speaking, the poor quality of Thai films is not due to lack of equipment or lack of talent but to the lack of proper planning and intelligent application. The director in Thailand is the key figure in drawing out the best from the actors (37:20). Because of the great burden of production responsibilities, he slights the directing which results in a film without a professional touch. All these have led to the poor quality of Thai films today.

The Crew

There have been an excessive number of movie makers in the country, and most major and independent companies have very large production crews. There are sometimes two to three directors working on the same production, three to four cameramen, ten to twenty movie stars and supporting casts. The technical crews are composed of
about twenty or thirty people and usually employ fifty to sixty general helpers (3:36).

From a business point of view, it seems the Thai producers have helped to create obtain jobs, but if the films do not make a good profit, then they will lose a great deal of money because the crews are larger than actually needed for production.

The Film Stars

Talent is not necessarily connected with income or status (39:209). A star may or may not be gifted. Some are truly distinguished; others are good; and still others may owe their success primarily to their photographic quality and personalities (39:210).

In Thailand, for all film stars with any ability, getting a suitable role is one of the most important problems. A good actor can be made by a strong role which offers potentialities for him to develop, or he can be embarrassed by a meaningless one.

There are fewer film stars in Thailand compared with other film producing nations. Due to the lack of film stars in the industry, sometimes one must play many roles in the same day and for many companies. It has created conflicts between one producer and another. The producers,
then, must fight for the actors or actresses to be in their films. There is no doubt that most Thai films use the same actors and actresses (3:42).

Film stars in Thailand are usually known by advertising and publicity rather than from radio or television. Each studio has its own publicity department. They function to continuously publicize actors or actresses and build up those whom the studio is planning to make into "Stars."

A major part of the outside publicity agent's work is to make the actors more desirable to the studios. One technique which is popularly used in Thailand is the spreading of gossip and rumors (37:42). Among other techniques is a build-up in the press and magazines. For example, stories and pictures appear in a large number of national magazines with details of the star's private life. Many actors and actresses who employ their own publicity agents are usually on their way to becoming stars.

Hiring movie actors or actresses in Thailand is very simple. Most Thai stars are hired by the producers for a flat fee, or 50 per cent down and the remainder after the film has been released (47:24).

In the past several years, most Thai actors and actresses have performed in terms of doing a "favor" more
than earning money. So, the average annual income of the Thai stars is less than people think.

In the early days, the industry did not have a so-called "star system" to protect their benefits (see appendix D for the advantage and disadvantage of the star system). The industry did not have a selling or buying of actors by a middleman who handled negotiations between the actors and studios, and, in turn, received 10 per cent or more of the actor's earnings (39:80). This solution did not work in Thailand.

The Thai stars are not millionaires like the stars in Hollywood or some other countries. Many of them have only reputation -- but no money. If the film makes good profit at the box-office, then they will be lucky enough to get the rest of their money from the producers. But if the film does not make any money, then, they have to wait for a long period of time or some might not get it at all. Thai actors and actresses face this problem in the country today.

A recent study of the actor's income indicated that there were wide variations in ability, status and income among the 115 actors in the country (33:18). At the top, in status and income, are the stars. Beneath them are the second leads, usually supporting actors. The Thai
producers' organization in 1970 divided their membership in the following categories according to annual income (Table 5).

### TABLE 5

PERCENTAGE ANNUAL INCOME EARNED BY THAI ACTORS AND ACTRESSES IN 1970

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Film Stars</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Earning (Baht)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>over 40,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>15,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>27.5</td>
<td>10,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75</td>
<td>61.2</td>
<td>Less than 5,000.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


On examination, the problems of the movie actors and actresses spring from the amount of the studio control (3:40). All actors or actresses must accept the role offered them by the producers. If they refuse a role, they are suspended without pay. This, of course, is particularly frustrating for talented actors who want to demonstrate the wide variety of roles they can play. Most Thai stars, therefore, are completely dependent on the demands of the producer (3:45).
The actor's duties involve not only appearing for work on camera, but following all the necessary and reasonable directions of his producer in all respects.

Control over the actor's work is in the hands of the producers (3:50). Sometimes the performers may have to cooperate with the producer in the matter of publicity for the film. He may, for example, be obligated during the agreement term to help in publicity for the film. Unfortunately, such special services are not considered "extra" but a part of the basic consideration for the employment agreement (6:35).

It is also interesting to note that most Thai films never use stuntmen or women to substitute for the stars. The movie actors must perform the risky scenes themselves. Some who have ability may do well, but some do not perform well enough to avoid injury. Lack of stuntmen and women sometimes makes it very difficult to get a good performance from the actors or actresses in the roles in which they are unfamiliar or inexperienced. In Thai films, too often, many fighting scenes are more comedy than drama (3:58).

Another problem in Thai film production is lack of a make-up man. Naturally, Thai film productions supply make-up for the movie stars. However, most make-up persons in the industry lack the knowledge of techniques in make-up
for films and television purposes. Inexperience in make-up sometimes makes the performers look unrealistic, flat or pale. A statistical study has recently revealed that most Thai make-up personnel are persons who have experience in beauty salons (3:61). So they do make-up the same way they did for their regular customers.

Motion Picture Laboratories

There has been a critical shortage of motion picture laboratories in the country. A recent report by the National Economic Development Board indicated that there were five motion picture laboratories operating in Thailand and two of these were engaged only in film processing. There is no major sound stage or editing laboratory existing in Thailand (18:22).

In the early days, and even at the present time, most Thai films must be sent out to be processed in the nearby countries, such as Hong Kong, Japan and Australia (18:30). By having such services done outside of the country, of course, the producers as well as the Thai government have lost a great deal of money. This problem has been taken under serious consideration by the Thai government. An attempt has been made by the government to find some solutions that will help Thai people and encourage them to
open more motion picture laboratories in the country.

There are several factors in the lack of motion picture laboratories in the industry. These factors are:

1. Human factors, such as poverty, educational background, culture, ignorance and social structure.

2. Factors arising from the administration such as limitations of budget, personnel, and supplies.

BUDGET FACTORS

Financial Aspects of the Industry

The motion picture industry in general operates on borrowed finance (1:24).

According to the Thai National Bank, the financial resources of the producers show that 90 per cent of the Thai producers depend on borrowed funds (42:25). A study revealed that the source of finance were family, friends, relatives, private finance corporations and banks. These persons provide credit or loans to the producers for one reason or another, and for periods and on terms as settled between them or forced by the circumstances. The bulk of the investments, however, come from family-relatives and banks.

The loans are generally taken for short periods and
are obtained at high interest rates ranging from 25 per cent to 55 per cent per annum. Interest is deducted in advance at time of renewal which makes the actual rate of interest excessive. The newcomers, in absence of any knowledge of the economic side of the trade, lacking talent and experience, highly inflate the interest rates in the market (46:102). Loans are sometimes represented by bonds or mortgages as security.

For Thailand, as a whole, the highest interest rates are those charged by the local shopkeepers and, somewhat surprisingly, by landlords. The lowest rates are obtained from relatives.

Table 6 indicates the monthly interest rates by lenders.

In recent years a number of varied financial sources have assumed an interest in motion picture financing of a specialized variety. For example, the Loan Office for Small Industries Development (LOSID) was established within the Ministry of Finance to assist small-scale film-making enterprises (46:127). The Industrial Finance Corporation of Thailand (IFCT) is also intended to assist in the establishment, expansion or modernization of private industrial enterprises and to encourage the participation of private capital, both internal and external, in such
TABLE 6
MONTHLY INTEREST RATES BY TYPE OF LENDER

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Lender</th>
<th>Monthly Interest Rate (Percentage)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Relative</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighbor</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial Lender</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Store</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landlord</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Money Lender</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SOURCE: Derived from Institute for Economic and Social Research, 1970.

However, since the banks and private finance corporations which supply such funds require regular fixed charges, the tendency to experiment is restricted. The banks lend money only for those films which they consider good risks (41:21).

The loan terms require all filmmakers who are interested in borrowing money to provide a statement which includes: the number of pictures to be made, the total amount of money to be spent, and the date when they are to
be finished (47:36).

Unfortunately, only a few producers are able to attract this form of 100 per cent distributor financing. Many other who cannot meet the requirements of the loan terms will look elsewhere for the support of their projects. Most of them turn to friends or relatives, hopefully to loans without any "public offering" as might be required under the Securities and Exchange law (47:40).

Going to friends or relatives for substantive film financing has not proven to be too difficult a problem. The form of organization may well be dependent on the interest and involvement of the investor. From the point of view of flexibility, investors may be offered a share or profit participation by either the producing corporation or its shareholders in the total amount of needed investment (47:75).

The method of family-friend financing has been widely used by Thai film makers who have little status and less funds to make a film.

Table 7 indicates the loans approved by the Loan Office for Small Industries Development for the period of 1964 to 1967.
TABLE 7

LOSID HISTORY, 1964-1967
(Amount in Thousand Baht)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Loans Applied</th>
<th>Loans Approved</th>
<th>Loans Disbursed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Amount</td>
<td>Number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1964</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1967</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SOURCE: Compiled from data provided by LOSID, 1967.

Volume of Investment in the Film Industry

The entire industry is built on an incorrect system of accounting. It is difficult to get a true idea of the total volume of investment in it. However, the usual manner of expenditure in the production of a picture is found under these areas:

1. Material of the picture - story, dialogue, scenario and lyrics.
2. Cast of the picture - main players, character players, and extras.
3. Staff for production - director, technical crew and advisor.
5. Studio charges - rent and overhead expenses
6. Art and sets - setting decoration and costumes
7. Sound and photography
8. Raw material
9. Processing
10. Editing
11. Publicity
12. Overhead charge - transportation, food and miscellaneous expenses

Source: "Kingdom of Thailand," Industrial Finance Corporation of Thailand Act (1959), Section II.

Table 8 shows allocation of costs to the production budget in Thailand, and Table 9 shows the estimated budget of one production company as given by the producers.

Financing difficulties create a picture of many dimensions. When the producer is short of funds, he needs the money badly either to pay his creditors or to continue in business. In either case, he has to borrow the money at fantastic rates of interest, and comes under pressure for recovering the investment quickly. The following consequences arise as a result:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main Expenditures</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Story, dialogue, scenario, lyrics</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cast</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direction</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raw Material</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studio and overhead</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technicians</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laboratories</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Classification</th>
<th>Estimated (Baht)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Story, Scenario, Lyrics</td>
<td>30,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Stars and cast</td>
<td>30,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Director</td>
<td>30,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Cameraman</td>
<td>15,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Art Director</td>
<td>15,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Narrators</td>
<td>5,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Publicity</td>
<td>2,500.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Processors</td>
<td>2,500.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Editors</td>
<td>2,500.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Sound recorder</td>
<td>2,500.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Makeup man</td>
<td>2,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Technicians</td>
<td>2,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Still cameraman</td>
<td>1,500.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Grips</td>
<td>750.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Gaffers</td>
<td>750.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Wardrobe</td>
<td>1,500.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Electricity</td>
<td>1,300.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
<td>5,000.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**SOURCE:** Statistic "prices," Bank of Thailand, 1970

**Total:** 146,500.00
(1) Producers tend to add such things in the picture which in his opinion would please the financier and distributors.

(2) Producers, many times, show difference towards the picture after taking the money and as a result, the picture which started very well ends miserably.

The high rate of interest charged and the ever-present shortage of financial resources have been the direct cause of many producers prematurely retiring from the film industry. Many of them drop out forever (20:114).

The cost of a motion picture today, when considered on a global average, has increased five times since 1921. Table 10 gives an idea of the present position in regard to some of the salient features.

SOME PROBLEMS UNDERLYING THE MOTION PICTURE BUSINESS

The movie industry today has been weakened in some respects, but it has gained strength in others and has managed not merely to survive, but to prevail, as a formidable media-system (30:13). A few general observations quickly support this truth. The theatrical motion picture is experiencing steady and certain economic revival and
### TABLE 10

**WORLD ECONOMY OF MOTION PICTURES 1959**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Language of Picture</th>
<th>Average Minimum Shooting Time (days)</th>
<th>Average Screening Time (Minutes)</th>
<th>Average Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>U.S.A.</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>$1,000,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>Yen 80,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>Hindi</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>Rs. 450,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>French</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>Fs. 140,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>Italian</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>120 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>De-lire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Britain</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>L 65,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**SOURCE:** International Motion Picture Almanac, 1959.
growth. Audience figures have risen to a million a week (30:110). Production starts continue to rise each year among major companies. The general creative outlook is optimistic and further economic expansion is indicated.

In changing from a simple agricultural economy to a complex system of production and diversifications for a world market, Thailand is confronted with many economic problems (43:33). For example, a change from a subsistence economy to a commercial economy calls for a knowledge and understanding of the principles of marketing, banking, and sophistication in international trading.

**Distribution**

The importance of the distributor cannot be underestimated because without his services the producer will be required to have his own distributing office, which will need more capital and greater expansion of his organization.

The distributors generally obtain the pictures on these terms: (a) By taking the pictures on a commission basis for exploitation, in which case the commission ranges from 15 per cent to 20 per cent, and (b) By outright purchase of 'negative' rights or exploitation rights for a fixed period or in perpetuity (26:15).
In 1940, there were only five distribution agencies in the country (38:63), and all were dealing in foreign-made films. In Thailand, the distributor came as an intermediary only with the increase of production activities and increase in the number of films made in the country.

There are three types of distributors practicing in Thailand today. They are:

1. The producer as a distributor. Most producers have become distributors automatically by dealing directly with the theatre owners. Profits are split 50/50 on the net income from the box-office receipts (12:22). In this case, the theatre owners set their minimum gross box-office receipts quite high. If the net profit is less than the minimum set by the theatre owner, it means the show must be closed.

2. The theatre owner as a distributor. Many theatre owners would like to buy the film directly from the producer and own it himself. After the purchase, the film will be shown first in their own theatre. Then, he will sell or rent it to another person or agency.

3. The professional distributors. This group operates a wide range of distribution outlets.
throughout the country. A recent study by the Institute of Economic Studies indicated that there are some 120 distributing concerns in the country engaged in the distribution of Thai films. Some have countrywide organization, but most of them are single units (15:10). In addition to these, there are some twenty concerns which distribute foreign-made films, and some of these are incorporated in foreign countries (15:35).

According to the estimates of the film industry, there are four circuits in all covering a total area of 200,128 square miles with 37 million population (21:12). An effort was made to assess their position in 1970, and the following situation was found as shown in Table 11, and Figure 2.

The problem of Thai distributors is their lack of cultural and educational background and, consequently, their notions about public taste frequently misled the producer.

The tendency of giving wrong reports on the collections at the box-office to the distributors by many exhibitors and to the producers by distributors is common in Thailand. It is the outcome of deliberate action, and the
## TABLE 11

CIRCUITWISE DISTRIBUTION OF FILMS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Circuit</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Number of Stations</th>
<th>Number of Films</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Central Circuit</td>
<td>11,980,000</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>315</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Northern Circuit</td>
<td>8,125,000</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Northeast Circuit</td>
<td>12,605,000</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>515</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. South Circuit</td>
<td>4,689,000</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>37,399,000</strong></td>
<td><strong>120</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,530</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Present Distribution Set-up in Thailand

Distribution Circuits are named as in Table II.
main motive behind it is to retain a greater margin of profit than what is legitimate (12:30).

The Problem of Markets

A knowledge of markets is very essential for the production of any article, because the demand is always related to certain limitations governed by the theory of markets (28:40). The marketing of motion pictures depends on the demand for them, and the demand is finally governed by the number of movie-goers, their economic position, their taste in pictures, the number of films, and the facilities and scope for exports and imports of the pictures (28:42).

The market for motion pictures in Thailand is limited. As mentioned earlier in the introduction, cultural features are the reasons that limit the Thai films market. But the most important internal problem is that the theatre owners do not accept Thai films to exhibit in their theatres. There are two reasons: (1) most Thai films are uninteresting and would bore the audience, and (2) technically, they are not interesting attractions (4:23). The theatre owners prefer foreign-made films rather than Thai films not only for the quality of the films, but for the profit at the box-office as well.
A total of 561 foreign-made films were imported into Thailand in 1969. They were received from the following countries as shown in Table 12:

**TABLE 12**

IMPORT OF FOREIGN FILMS, 1969.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Number of Films</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>U.S.A.</td>
<td>164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great Britain</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>561</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Table 12 shows the quantity of the pictures imported in 1969. It also shows that the main source of imports has been the U.S.A. The cost of imported pictures ranged from 2 to 2.50 baht per linear foot. Distributors of foreign films are allowed to remit 70 per cent of the gross revenue collected in the country to parent producers of the pictures (42:35).
Imports

The motion picture industry of Thailand depends on imports generally for equipment, raw materials and chemicals. Raw material and equipment are imported because they are not manufactured in the country. The supplies, therefore, are delivered here to the consumers by the importers, distributors and incorporated companies within the foreign countries. These supplies mainly come from Hong Kong, Japan, France, Germany, England, and the United States (32:69).

The amount of total foreign exchange required for the motion industry depends on its total requirements. When gigantic sums of money must be found for transfer to another country, the government comes into the picture and import controls are enforced to check profound disturbances in the monetary equilibrium and foreign exchange, to regulate imports and exports, and to determine the currency position in accordance with the economic structure of the country.

The graph in Figure 3 shows the total import of raw films and equipment. A - C indicates years, while A - B represents the value of imports in millions of bahts. The graph indicates an immediate increase in equipment imports.
FIGURE 3

TOTAL IMPORTS OF RAW FILM AND STUDIO EQUIPMENT IN THAILAND, 1940 - 1950

Note: —— indicates raw film (dotted line)

— indicates equipment

just after World War II. After that the fall in imports was due to the inability of the studio owners to invest money and improve the conditions of their studios in the face of keen competition and a low margin of profits. On the other hand, the quantity of raw film rose after the second World War due to an increase in film production activities in the country (44:18).

Exports

Every country in the world, to enjoy a better position in the field of motion picture production, needs the exploitation of its pictures outside the country for better commercial success. Thailand is no exception. The American motion picture industry, being at the top in motion picture technique, is the largest exporter of pictures (40:12). Japan is on the way to capture more and more markets. Britain, France, India, and China have also gained markets in Thailand. The exports of Thai films suffer from slackness on the part of producers to exploit their pictures, besides certain technical difficulties.

Thailand does not have export facilities worth the name beyond the markets of neighboring countries such as China, India, Vietnam, Laos, Singapore, the Philippines and Hong Kong. Demand for Thai films in many of these coun-
tries is slight.

Thai films have been sent out to be shown in nearby countries, such as Hong Kong, Cambodia, Vietnam, Laos and Malaysia (6:43). But when the Thai films are shown, the title and dialogue are changed into Chinese, Vietnamese or whatever language is spoken in that country. Consequently, the audience does not realize that the film they have seen is a Thai film.

In the author's opinion, the motion picture industry can get markets outside the country easily in two cases. The first case would be in those countries where Thai nationals form a major part of the population, and the other would be in those where people are anxious to know more about Thailand. In addition to these, in promoting the exhibition of motion pictures one must understand that the fundamental need at the moment is one of quality in theme and fine standards in presentation on a universal level. If the motion picture lacks such values, exhibition can only be secured in other countries out of courtesy and curiosity; otherwise they will be excluded from exhibition. In all these cases, attempts should be made by the Thai Producers' Organization or by the producers individually to overcome the differences and no attempt should be made to ask the government concerned to
build up the industry. The motion picture industry in this matter should be self-reliant.

Theatre

Motion picture theatres in Thailand are considered the best decorated in the world. There were 100 theatres located in Bangkok and there are about 500 more in the rest of the country (10:31).

The theatres in Thailand are divided into three classes:

1. The first class theater. This theatre is large and equipped with excellent equipment, such as the finest sound system, air conditioning, reclining seats, refreshments near at hand, and many more conveniences for the audiences. This theatre always shows first-run films from foreign countries. Inside and out it is beautifully decorated and well designed. There are 1,000 to 1,500 seats in all first-class theatres.

2. The second class theatre. This theatre is also equipped with excellent equipment and facilities. The theatre itself is a little smaller than the first class. There are only 500 to 800 seats and most films are second run. The middle class or working people usually come to this theatre.
3. The third class theatre. It is smaller than the first and second class theatres. It is equipped with inexpensive equipment and only 200 to 400 seats. Most of these theatres are located in the rural areas where the low income people live. The third class theatres always show two feature films daily. The films are third run.

A recent survey by the National Economic Development Board indicated that 96 per cent of all first class theatres in Bangkok show foreign-made films and only 4 per cent show Thai films (8:25).

The total films shown in sixty first class theatres can best be understood by reference to Table 13.

**TABLE 13**

TOTAL OF FIRST CLASS THEATRES SHOWING FOREIGN-MADE FILMS IN THAILAND, 1973

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Theatres</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. American and British Films</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Japanese Films</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Chinese Films</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Indian Films</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Thai Films</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Others</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>60</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It should be noted that the majority of Thai films have become very marketable only in the rural areas (8:29). A recent survey poll indicated that 60 per cent of all theatres exhibit Thai films, 30 per cent show foreign-made films, and 10 per cent show both Thai and foreign films (8:32).

Show Times

Thai films and foreign films are usually shown five times per day. The screening time for one show is about two and one-half hours. The show times begin at 12:00 p.m., 14:00 p.m. and 16:45 p.m. On legal holidays, the show times begin at 9:00 a.m. or 10:00 a.m. (10:46).

Table 14 indicates the average time Thai films and foreign-made films run in the first and second class theatres.

It is also to be noted that the third class theatres are not included in this table because the show times range between three to four days more or less. It depends on how interesting the film is. As mentioned earlier, the third class theatre always shows two feature films each period. There are no drive-in theatres in Thailand.

Rate of Admissions

There are different classes in each movie. The rate


## TABLE 14

**AVERAGE LENGTH OF PLAYING TIME OF FILMS SHOWN IN THEATRES, 1973**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>First Class</th>
<th>Second Class</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. American Films</td>
<td>2-4 weeks</td>
<td>3-6 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. British Films</td>
<td>1-2 weeks</td>
<td>2-4 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Japanese Films</td>
<td>1-2 weeks</td>
<td>3-5 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Chinese Films</td>
<td>1-2 weeks</td>
<td>3-5 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Indian Films</td>
<td>0-1 weeks</td>
<td>2-3 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Thai Films</td>
<td>2-4 weeks</td>
<td>1-2 weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Other</td>
<td></td>
<td>1-2 weeks</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**SOURCE:** Institute of Economic Studies, 1973.

of tickets varies from class to class, and include the entertainment tax. The movie tickets are generally priced at rates dictated by a tariff which has been framed for the whole State. Prices are fixed according to taxation slabs, and as a result in many cases the exhibitor has to increase his charge by 50 per cent in order to meet the mounting overhead costs.

### The Audiences

The influence of films is much stronger than that wielded by the press and radio. Today motion pictures have
a definite place in the daily lives of the people. It is, therefore, significant to see what sort of people go to the movies. A survey was made of 100 persons representing some 2,000 families, selected at random, from Bangkok and nearby cities. This study was conducted by the Institute of Population Studies at Chulalongkron University in 1970 (45:69). The main study is to analyze the composition of the film audience and their corresponding proportions. The following are the results obtained as shown in Table 15:

**TABLE 15**

**ANALYSIS BY AGE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Results on the Basis of Age Groups</th>
<th>Percentage of Cinema Goers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12 to 17 years</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 to 30 years</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31 to 40 years</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41 to 45 years</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46 to 65 years</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 65 years</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Also Table 16 indicates the following:

**TABLE 16**

**ANALYSIS BY ECONOMIC GROUPS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Percentage of Cinema Goers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lower group</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle group</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher group</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unclassified</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**SOURCE:** Institute of Population Studies, 1970.

This survey further brought out the following general conclusions: (1) the attendance at motion pictures is a little higher in summer, (2) women go less than men, the younger group go more often than the middle aged, and the persons in the lower group of incomes enjoy more movies than the rest (45:72).

The popularity of the motion pictures cannot be overestimated, but still the good pictures fail and the bad ones succeed. Therefore, the question is, what kind of themes are used in producing these films?

The feature films produced at the moment can be
classified as follows: Love stories, Social, Historical, Crime Detective, Melodrama, Comedy, and Children films.

The feature films imported from other countries, however, provide even more variety and generally develop the theme more professionally. See Appendix C for more details of Thai feature films.

**Box-Office**

The production of motion pictures costs money—usually many thousands of dollars (27:160). When a producer invests in or secures backing of his films, he has a definite idea in mind; to bring more money at the box-office than was spent in producing it. Most Thai producers think that every picture must be a top box-office hit and brings in from 100 to 200 per cent net profits.

A recent nationwide survey of the annual income reports shows that the net profits from the box-office of all theatres in the country was more than thirty-five million baht* (33:48). *See introduction on Page 3

Table 17 shows the total annual collections from all theatres in the country.

**Taxation**

Every country has its own way to tax people. The basic concern of the Thai government has been with the
### TABLE 17

**NET BOX-OFFICE COLLECTION IN ALL FILMS IN 1972**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Estimated Net Collections (in million baht)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>American and British films</td>
<td>15,800,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japanese, Chinese and Indian films</td>
<td>10,000,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thai films</td>
<td>4,000,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>6,000,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>35,800,000.00</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** National Bank Report, 1972.

Income and expenditure of the State, and with the adjustment of the one to the other. The main consideration in this study is the film industry of Thailand, and when we take into account this industry from the idea of taxation, the author feels that it is heavily burdened in this area. Various taxes have their effects on the motion picture industry, and a much stronger case can be made for each tax (12:31). The taxes imposed on the motion picture industry in Thailand are: Import tax, Income tax, Excise levy on
exposed films, Advertising tax, Entertainment tax, Sales tax, Property tax, Censorship fees, License fees for cinema (12:48).

The import tax definitely imposes a heavy burden on the motion picture industry. The tax on raw material is at the rate of 3 baht per foot plus 5 per cent surcharge on the total (26:11). Whereas, on larger equipment such as cameras, lighting fixtures, etc., it is charged at the rate of 25 per cent plus a surcharge of 5 per cent.

It is not only that the Thai industry has a high import tax, there are several nations in Southeast Asia that have increased their import tax. Indonesia, for example, has raised its import tax on foreign films to 70 per cent (34:121).

Income tax also creates some difficulty for the film stars of Thailand. The Thai stars have complained that because their earnings vary sharply from year to year, the tax paid in a year of high earnings is excessive. They suggest that their earnings be prorated over a period of four years to arrive at an equitable average income and tax (37:62).

Problem of Training Institute

Thailand's motion picture industry does not sponsor
any type of formal training in the craft of movie-making. There is practically no training center worth the name in the country so far. The Technical Institute of Bangkok operates in Thailand today and is training young people in photography and motion picture production. Their courses are more of an academic nature and, as no studio is attached to the institution, training does not prove versatile. As a result, students do not come out better than those working in the motion picture industry at the moment and who have learned by trial and error (47:62).

Taking the attitude of the motion picture industry into consideration, the initiative for establishing such an institute will have to be taken by the government, and cooperation will have to be invited from the motion picture industry. The industry should participate for its own progress and benefit. The institute should provide training to the newcomers, and give facilities to those persons who are already involved in motion picture production. In addition, the institute should also undertake the work of collecting up-to-date facts and figures relating to the motion picture industry, and should then have a research section to compile all such data to carry on research in market trends, as to the desires of the public. There should be fully equipped studio and laboratory with the
Institute to enable the students to gain practical experience. The Institute should make the selection of the students for training strictly in the light of the requirements of the motion picture industry of the country.

Training should be in two parts, one consisting of theory and the other of practice. The course should be so designed as to make the training versatile, so that it may enable the students to handle any aspect of film production which they may be called upon to handle in the motion picture industry after their employment. The students, after completion of the training, should be required to undergo some practical experience in a film studio in the motion picture industry before a diploma is granted. It would help the students to understand what to aim at and how to achieve it. The period of training can vary from two to three years according to the progress of the individual concerned.

ANALYSIS OF THE PROBLEM OF THAI FEATURE FILMS

Motion pictures are expensive to make and people spend their hard-earned money and valuable time to see them. It is, therefore, important to examine as to what extent commercial film is responsible for bringing about a change in the attitude of the audience, and how problems can be
solved for the film industry.

The effects of motion pictures cannot be measured without an examination of their content, photographic techniques, editing, lighting, and sound. An attempt, therefore, must be made to measure the content and quality of the feature films produced in this country from 1930 to 1970 by taking into account the following characteristics: theme, sincerity in story telling, unconventional techniques, quality of sound, photography, direction, and cast.

The feature films which people see daily in the country can be termed good as long as they are merely an escape. The majority of our feature films, therefore, can only be said to provide the opportunity for light fun, and very rarely do they depict some social goal which can benefit the community at large. They simply provide, in most of the cases, an escape from the daily social problems rather than offer social realities and their solution. It is simply the outcome of fact that Thai feature films are produced for personal profits and no attention is devoted to the needs of the audience. Truly speaking, the feature films produced in this country do not constitute a worthwhile leisure activity and is regarded, nevertheless, as a waste of time.
Analysis of the poor quality of Thai films is another big controversial point. Using The Farmer feature film as an example, the following can be observed: The Farmer was the first Thai feature film of 3,700 feet, produced in 16 mm, black and white, and it took ten months to produce. It was produced by M. L. Toy Choomsai, producer and the owner of the Sri-Krong Film Productions, in 1930. The film proved to be a great success when released on May 17, 1930 to the Charem Thai Theatre in Bangkok (23:11).

The theme of The Farmer was simple to follow: it concerned a farm girl who left her home to seek fun and fortune in the city (which was a trend of the time). She met with romances, adventures and misfortunes. Finally, realizing the hopelessness of the situation in the unfamiliar surroundings, she returned home. The story touched the mood of the Thai people at the time. This film was three and one-half hours long. Thai films are too long due to the fact that books are not rewritten in script form. Each scene was shot just as it was described in the original story. In other words, if the book is long, the film would sometimes exceed more than three and a half hours. This is the main problem of Thai feature films today.

Among other problems of The Farmer are the production techniques, such as the following:
1. Camera techniques: most of the scenes in The Farmer were shot at eye level (there is no high or low angle shot employed). Panning and tilting cameras are used, but less than usual in this film. Further examination indicates that 75 per cent of the shots are long shots; 20 per cent are medium, and 5 per cent are closeups.

2. Editing techniques: there is no fade-in and fade-out or any lap-dissolve technique used in this film. Fewer editing techniques added to the length of the film. As an example, in the opening scene of The Farmer, Sopa, the heroine is leaving her home to go to the city and the camera follows her wherever she goes. In a more advanced technique, less film would be used to cover this sequence of her trip to the city by employing some editing technique such as a lap-dissolve. It would shorten the physical distance; as well as making the film more interesting.

3. Lighting techniques: lighting is seldom used. Most of the scenes are shot outdoors. Lack of lighting equipment has created many problems when some scene has to be shot inside. So most of the interior shots were merely dark (low-key), because
lighting was not widely used until 1935. The director also does not have the ability nor the training to direct the stars. Therefore, Thai film stars must perform on their own. All Thai films of this period, 1930-1940, were silent. Narrators were needed to tell the story when the film was shown to the audience. The narrator was the one who did both the talking and sound effects for the film.

Many of the feature films produced during the period 1940-1950, 1960-1970, such as: The Diamonds - 1940 (black and white), Santi Vena - 1950 (color), Panti Nora Sing - 1960 (color), Sur Fa Din Salai - 1970 (color). With the exception of the addition of color, the improvement in the use of photography techniques, lighting techniques, and sound in film, there have been no innovations in filmmaking since the first feature film The Farmer (1930).

Taking Santi Vena (1950) as example, this film was produced by Mr. Russ Pestanyee, who introduced the new concept of film in color, along with added improvements in camera and lighting techniques, editing techniques, and sound. The film was made in 35 mm. Even with these few innovations, Santi Vena was the one Thai feature film that excelled in world filmmaking and won the International Film Award in Cannes, France, 1951. However, the theme of this
film was familiar as that in The Farmer of 1930.

From 1970 till today, no innovations have been developed in Thai films. The themes and production techniques of such films as, The Mother, Enoy and Skuntara, Nanak Pra Kanong, and Tong, produced in this period utilized the same basic technical skills as used in The Farmer (1930).

There is no doubt that most of Thai feature films still remain technically and artistically poor. Today the majority of the feature films are being produced and distributed as cheaply as possible in order to obtain large monetary returns rather than to educate or morally benefit the Thai people.
CHAPTER IV

GOVERNMENT AND THE MOTION PICTURE INDUSTRY

Censorship

Censorship is universal, or almost nearly so, throughout the world (2:26). The content of all films, of course, too easily brings down the wrath of national and local bodies in many countries. The troublesome twins of candid sex and unbridled violence are constant problems in many places (2:32).

There is no doubt that films have a tremendous responsibility in educating people, particularly the young. Movies are still filled with violence, crime and murder (30:2). The type of films which concern the government are those which may negatively affect children and this concern has led the government to establish a Board of Film Censors.

The Board was set up in January 1960. Few amendments were made in censorship rules in 1965-1966 (22:6). A bill to establish the Board of Film Censors Act 1960 was passed by the Parliament in the budget section of 1959 (22:10).
The Act makes specific provision for the constitution of the Board of Film Censors for the examination of films both domestic and foreign.

The Board of Film Censors is composed of a chairman and seven honorary members, appointed by the government. The Board has its office at Bangkok, created within the Police Headquarters of Thailand. Members of the Board are appointed for three years, but can be eligible for re-appointment. The Board is to meet at least one every three months, but a meeting can be called in urgent cases. Decisions are made by a majority vote, and the chairman exercises a vote in case of a tie. The chairman has the power to determine the conditions of service with the previous approval of the government (22:32).

General Principles

The Board of Film Censors set out the principal rules to guide the Board in sanctioning films for public exhibition as follows:

1. No picture should show in an unflattering light the members of institutions of a foreign country with which the country has relations.

2. All pictures designed for export into the foreign lands should "sell" the Thailand way of life.
3. No pictures should emphasize drinking, delinquency, divorce, or any immoral subject.

Censorable Material

It is not desirable that a film shall be classified as suitable for public exhibition, either unrestricted or restricted to adults, which:

A. Deals with crime in such a manner as to:
   (1) Uphold criminal acts
   (2) Enlist the sympathy or admiration of the audience for criminal characters
   (3) Create the impression that crime pays or is a normal incident of ordinary life and not to be reprobated

B. Deals with vice or immorality in such a manner as to:
   (1) Uphold vicious or immoral acts
   (2) Depict vice or immorality as attractive
   (3) Cast a halo of success or glory around the vicious or immoral

C. Deals with the relations between sexes in such a manner as to:
   (1) Rape, premeditated seduction, or criminal assaults on women
(2) illicit sexual relations
(3) in a state of nudity

D. Is intended or likely to:

(1) Wound the susceptibilities of any foreign nation or any community or the followers of any religion
(2) Promote disorder, violence, a breach of the law or disaffection or resistance to government

It is significant to note that most of the members are conservative. They believe strongly in the morality of the people, religion and society. If these members find any part of the film to be objectionable, they will cut it all out. In 1960, there were thirty-nine sex-films censored and approximately fifty violent films were banned (11:34).

The Board of Film Censors will give a certificate of approval for those films they found that do not violate the rules set by this Board. This certificate will indicate the films for unrestricted public exhibition or for restricted public exhibition. See Appendix D for sample of form.

Since these rules have come into effect several
organizational groups brought out some actions opposed to such regulations. These actions have been generally accepted by the producers and distributors.

Mr. Russ Pestanyee, a former president of the Thai Producers' Organization, said in the Bangkok session in 1968:

The censors in Thailand are terrorizing the producers. If they persist in their present attitude it will involve a loss of several million baht for the Thai industry (23:13).

At the present time, the Producers' Organization opposing the censorship regulations has built up strongly in the country.

They try to influence legislation and get what they want through their organizations. They believe that good films cannot be created under such rules.

According to the national poll in 1970, 65 per cent of the people under thirty years of age would like to see films that have never been cut, 10 per cent of working persons, aged thirty-five to forty-five, agreed with the censorship of the films, 20 per cent do not care if they are censored or not, and 5 per cent had no opinion (15:36).

The Board of Film Censors carries on its work according to the censorship rules in 1971. The Board examined films as per Table 18.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>U.S.A.</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great Britain</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China (Taiwan)</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hong Kong</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cambodia</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vietnam (South)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laos</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>533</strong></td>
<td><strong>43</strong></td>
<td><strong>580</strong></td>
<td><strong>33</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In view of the author's experiences, the producer or the directors, in the majority of cases, do not have any confidence in or respect for the censorship rules. They do not realize their responsibility. Censorship has been considered a form of business suicide in the motion picture industry (29:126). While the producers continue to produce their films in constant conflict and fear of censorship, they, no doubt, sense a threat from the censorship rules, but cannot clearly identify and understand its nature.

However, in order to meet the apparent problem arising from the increasing number of sex and violence films, one has to lay down rigid lines of what can or cannot be seen or heard in films. The author would suggest that by using the rating system (Appendix E) from the United States as a guide, the censorship of films might be much easier.

**Employment in the Motion Picture Industry**

According to the Labor Force of Thailand, it is indicated that 15,466 or 1.1 per cent of the total in economic sector were employed in the film industry in 1960.

Production, distribution and exhibition are the three main avenues for employment in the motion picture industry (30:60). Production, being the most important side of the
film industry, requires a talent for story, dialogue, songs, directing, etc. The next important branch, distribution, requires talents for management and office work. The exhibition side also needs technical talents in projection booths, and for overall management and control (30:73).

The latest figures obtainable (1960) show the gradual growth increase in employment figures. This indicates that the total number of persons required in employment during a particular period mainly depends on the total number of studios in operation, extent of their activities, the total output of pictures, and on the general position and overall activities of the film industry as a whole.

Persons engaged in the motion picture industry come from all sectors of life irrespective of age, education and experience (Table 19).

The following analysis based on a 100 case study undertaken by the writer in Bangkok (1965, 1966 and reviewed 1967)* brings out the present conditions and displays the film industry's concern for the employee's professional background in the Thai film industry.

### Table 19

**Employment Characteristics**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sphere of Work</th>
<th>Average Age of Entry Industry</th>
<th>Average Education at the Time of Entry Industry</th>
<th>Experience at the Time of Entry Industry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Film Stars</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main role players</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>High school</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>High school</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Production Crews</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Producers</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>Intermediate</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Directors</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>College</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photographers</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>Intermediate</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art Directors</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>College</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Editors</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>High school</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writers</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>College</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Intermediate</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


**Problems of Employment**

The main problem with the present methods and ways of getting jobs in the motion picture industry is its dependence on the personal whims and fancies of the individuals (6:133). There is no scientific method of recruitment
which can enable the persons who are employed to keep pace with the growth and requirements of the industry. There are many things which help a person in securing a job in the motion picture industry, and it is not possible to determine with any accuracy the relative significance of each of them. Friendship, pressure, luck, education, ability to work hard, publicity and power, etc. All these have been found to be important elements that help in getting employment and attaining stardom.

Nepotism is very important and proves tremendously helpful in getting jobs in the motion picture industry (13:14). Since many of the assignments require very few skills, relatives and friends of the persons in power are easily fitted into them. A survey showed that an average of 70 per cent of the existing people in the Thai industry have secured their assignments on recommendations (13:20). Further examination reveals that if a person is born into a family engaged in the motion picture industry, he or she has a better opportunity to get a job. This apparent nepotism often scares new talents away.
CHAPTER V

DISCUSSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The foregoing discussion of the characteristics of various major problems of the Thai film industry suggests an urgent need for a reappraisal in terms of revision and reorganization. In this chapter, an attempt is made to identify the various major findings from this study and problems such as: (1) related to the economic needs of the country, (2) increasing the quality of films, (3) improving education of employees, (4) lowering interest rates on investments, (5) increasing available foreign markets, (6) rewriting present censorship rules, and (7) increased educational facilities for prospective employees. All these problems will be analyzed briefly with recommendations for further improvement in the Thai film industry.

1. The Thai film industry is not contributing economic of the country and, therefore, is in need of revision and organization.

Analysis. There have been several changes in Thailand during the past years, which affect the many
institutions of the country. The film industry, for example, is faced with the problems of interpersonal relationships and possible conflicts among its members. The economy moves toward a more complicated system of work and requires a new type of skills and social attitudes. All of these call for a new adjustment on the part of the people living in Thai society.

**Recommendation.** It should be the policy of the Ministry of Industry to:

(a) Encourage a reorganization of the present condition, by using the objectives in Chapter II as a guide so the new system's experience will encompass social and economic needs which confront the country. This would also provide the necessary economic stimulus needed among Thai producers so that they would be prepared to cope with these problems.

(b) Import foreign talent and techniques to upgrade production.

(c) Plan for other administrative or organizational changes which will be applicable to economic implementation.

2. The percentage of bad quality films is quite high in all film production in Thailand.

**Analysis.** Professional filmmakers are the most
important factor in raising the quality of film production. This would aid the economic development of the country.

**Recommendation.** It should be the policy of the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Industry together to:

(a) Emphasize upgrading of the producer's qualification in private independent companies before granting any licenses to operate their business.

(b) Raise the standard of the 'qualified producer' by requiring an apprenticeship and offering advanced training courses such as exposure to foreign techniques.

(c) Keep highly qualified filmmakers in the teaching profession by giving them better personal facilities and security.

3. Producers, directors, actors and actresses need more specialization in their preparation.

**Analysis.** It was noted in Chapter III that a high percentage of film production problems have created many conflicts among the producers, directors, actors and distributors. All these conflicts result from lack of knowledge of motion picture production.

**Recommendation.** It should be the policy of the Ministry of Education to:
(a) Provide more courses related specifically to film production.

(b) Offer those who are already in business a series of short courses in summer session or evening classes.

(c) Adopt a general policy of recruiting only the professional filmmakers to teach in the profession.

4. Financial support in terms of loans create a problem between the producers and the borrowers because of high interest rates.

Analysis. To enlarge and improve Thai film industry a loan must be provided to all filmmakers by the government for reconstruction and development of the industry. At present time, most of the Thai producers suffer from high interest rates set by the lenders in the country. The high interest rates cause many producers to drop out of the industry. Some have stopped in the middle of production because of lack of funds.

Recommendation. It should be the policy of the Ministry of Finance and the National Bank of Thailand to open up low interest loans for all producers who have the ability and talent, but lack funds to make films. These loans can be given to those who show evidence of outstanding work in such areas as writing stories, screenplay,
and scripts, etc. In turn, the country will have more good films that can be sent to open up new markets for Thai films in foreign lands.

5. A shortage of film distribution in foreign lands has brought Thai films to a limited world audience. In addition, the Thai government had lost more than 30,000,000 baht each year through the showing of imported foreign films in the country.

Analysis. Almost 75 per cent of the foreign-made films have been imported into the country, while only 4 per cent of Thai film have been exported to other countries. The imbalance of this figure has created many problems in the Thai market as well as for economic growth of the country.

Recommendation. It should be the policy of the Thai government to direct the Chamber of Commerce, who knows the world market well, to act as middleman or distributor and to find new markets for Thai films. This can be done by:

(a) Appointing someone to act as a representative of the country, and sending him out to contact other countries and attempted to bring Thai films to them.

(b) Establish Thai distributors in other countries and give them full support by reducing any export
6. The present use of vocabulary prescribing the various censorship rules tend to result in confusion and misunderstanding.

**Analysis.** The basic censorship rules used governing the viewing of films have led to the need of some clarification of these statements. This seems to be especially significant in view of the fact that new regulations are being recommended by the members of the Board of Film Censors and these were regulations which added to the confusion.

**Recommendation.** It should be the policy of the Ministry of Interior to:

(a) Reassess the current function and responsibilities of the censorship organization officers so that this role will be properly defined.

(b) Reorganize the Board of Film Censors so that it includes some representatives from the film industry. Provide them with basic guidelines so that they can fulfill this role effectively.

(c) One method which appears to be working successfully in the United States is the rating system. Such as:
C - General audiences: all ages admitted.
PG - Parental Guidance suggested.
R - Restricted: under 17 requires accompanying parent or adult guardian.
X - No one under 17 admitted.
(See Appendix E)

7. A shortage of film schools in the country has created many problems, almost every section in the film production.

Analysis. Thailand is rapidly becoming a young nation of economic growth in film production. The number of inexperienced individuals in the present Labor Force indicates the need for professional training. This dictates that a new type of school must be established to meet the manpower of the country.

Recommendation. It also should be the policy of the Ministry of Education to:

(a) Convert some of the present schools offering special professional training in the broad areas of films, business and managements into schools of film only.

(b) Attempt to provide training for any citizen of Thailand regardless of age or school attainment providing the need for such training can be ascertained. This training can be confined to a period of not over one year.
CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSIONS

In drawing conclusions from the data presented in the foregoing, the reader should bear in mind the limitations of the study. The author is not attempting to study the whole industry; rather, is only presenting facts relevant to the existing problems and procedures by which the industry is avowedly attempting to put its house in order to meet the economic growth of the country.

The study undertakes, first, to present a general picture of the industry, and second, to discuss particular problems that concern the country.

A study of the Thai film industry shows that past and present policies of the industry are largely responsible for its plight. The industry lacked leadership to solve the problems coming in the way of film production, distribution and exhibition. It has failed in its primary responsibility of affording adequate information of film production to all sections. Many of the ills are partly due to amateurs, who take on complicated assignments without any experience. Practical problems faced by the
producers are an erratic system of financing, the conflicts between distributors and exhibitors, and the shortage of skilled persons. All these vital factors have increased the cost of production and prolonged the time of completion of pictures. This because the Thai film industry has never cared to see and study new techniques and solve the standing problems in a united way.

Motion picture experts, as a matter of fact, will have to agree that the statistics of this industry, which occupies the fourth place in the Asian film market, are still unable to contend with the top motion picture producing countries. The following figures give an idea of the scale of the present-day Thailand motion picture industry:

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Total estimated investment in industry</td>
<td>35,000,000 baht</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Total number of persons employed</td>
<td>15,466</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Total number of major studios and independent units</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Total number of laboratories</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Total number of producers</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Total number of directors</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Total number of distributors</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Average yearly production of feature films</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
9. Average yearly imports of raw materials 10,000,000 baht
10. Average net yearly earnings from all films 75,000,000 baht

These statistics give eloquent testimony to the fact that if given an opportunity to grow, Thai films could become known to the world audience.

Reorganization in all sections of film production is essential. The government, too, should help in a positive manner. The emphasis should now be on finding lesser known but greater talent, tight production schedules, good story material and expert direction.

In the author's opinion, the film industry, under present circumstances, needs a system which contains a controlled economy while allowing the directors and producers the fullest latitude of freedom. The following scheme will meet this demand and it would improve the quality of pictures as well.

It has already been seen elsewhere that most of the studies are running at a loss. They do not get sufficient work even to meet their expenses. They suffer from so many other handicaps as well. It will be to their advantage, therefore, to join in groups and form their own cooperatives. It would not only bring down their cost of
operation, but would also help the producers to determine their production costs and operation costs more accurately.

These cooperatives are outlined as follows:

1. Production cooperatives
2. Producers' Committee
3. Cooperative Banks
4. Board of Directors of the Organization
5. Distribution Cooperatives
6. Motion Picture Theatres

The formation of the Production Cooperatives will be out of those units which will be formed by the producers themselves. The producers will be free to join the Production Cooperatives according to their own understanding which their colleagues to form the units for the purpose of picture production. It would eliminate the chances of indifferences which are found at the moment and the formation of such units will come to consist merit and talent of all types.

The Producers' Committee will be composed of one representative from each Production Cooperative. The main role of this committee will be to make rules and regulations for the working and guidance of respective cooperatives.
The Cooperative Bank will regulate the economy of the entire system and would control and handle the funds. It will be run under the management of a committee which will include the representatives from the cooperative committee of the producers, studios, distributors and the government.

The entire system up to this time will be governed and controlled under the supervision of the Board of Directors of the Organization. This Board should be formed out of the representatives from the Government, Producers' Committee, Cooperative Bank, Production Cooperative and the interested unions and associations. It will carry on the work of censorship and will control and guide all the affairs of the film industry besides framing rules and regulations, as required from time to time.

The Distribution cooperative will face the task of securing the commercial circuits by reducing the costs of distribution. It will determine and decide the scale of profits on one hand, and will deal with the press and publicity on the other. Foreign distribution companies, however, will be free to act in their own way, but will be allowed to receive help and guidance from the cooperative.

The Theatres will contact the distribution cooperative and would work in relation to their policies and along the lines proposed by the Cooperative Bank.
Each one under this system would be able to join and form the cooperative according to his talent and resources, and each unit would be able to discuss the means of exploiting its picture directly with the distribution cooperative and the bank, who will insure the system's economic stability. The system will not only bring a considerable reduction in the production cost, but would also create speed in the production of the pictures as well.

In viewing the existing position of the industry and its past history, there cannot be any better move towards greater stability than to the cooperatives as outlined above. This system would not affect the interest of individuals adversely, and it would benefit the industry as a whole.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


APPENDIX A

Ratio of Films Produced in Selected Asian Countries 1963 - 1964

In the period 1963-1964, for which the most recent comparative data are available, Thailand's ratio of film growth was the highest among the developing Asian nations. Among the nine nations involved, Thailand is the only one that has steadily increased film production each year.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Annual rate of film growth</th>
<th>Rate of film Production</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Burma</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>8.2 10.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Ceylon</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>6.7 10.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. China (Taiwan)</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>10.7 10.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. India</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>12.4 13.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Korea, Republic of</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>9.5 13.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Malaya</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>7.8 10.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Pakistan</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>5.7 11.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Philippines</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>7.4 9.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Thailand</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>14.9 15.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

APPENDIX B

THE STAR SYSTEM

The star system has long been a significant part of movie production; it was not initiated by the studios. In the early days, the names of the leading actors were not even publicized and members of the audience wrote to the studios for information about their favorites. The studios did not at first encourage this spontaneous fan mail because they feared that actors would demand more money if they knew about their popularity. Soon, however, they realized that the popularity of a star could be exploited, even if salaries did go up. The star system is, therefore, imposed on the public by the motion picture industry through the power of publicity.

From a business point of view, there are many advantages in the star system. The star has tangible features which can be advertised and marketed -- a face, a body, a pair of legs, a voice, a certain kind of personality, real or synthetic (39:228). The system provides a formula easy to understand and has made the production of movies seem more like just another business. The star system is designed to promote the fame of the film stars and thereby
increase the receipts of the box-office. The film stars, who got their publicity from the producers, became popular among the audience, and this practice still continues. One disadvantage of the use of the star system may be that it serves to hide other talent from the executives and disguises the quality of the story and the acting.
APPENDIX C

Classification of Feature Films in Thailand

The feature films produced in Thailand at the moment can be classified as follows:

(a) Love Stories: The element of love is predominant in such films.

(b) Social: All types of films which set modern style in dress and setting and remain distinct from mythological and historical themes.

(c) Biographical: Films depicting lives of great men.

(d) Crime Detective: Films carrying out some aspect of crime and corrupt practices in detail.

(e) Melodrama: These films possess a strong emotional appeal, and are generally based on some romantic or sensational plot having full range of crime, revenge, fighting, etc.

(f) Mystery: Films having mystical elements creating horror at times.

(g) Comedy: Films having humor in predominance with the element of satire and farce.

(h) Children: Films suitable for the young generation giving predominance to child stars in the main roles.

On examination of the details of settings, 52 per cent of the feature films were based on urban, 30 per cent on rural, and the rest a mixture of both, and the most interesting issue was that about 65 per cent of the feature
films were centered around the love affairs of young men and women. In short, 90 per cent of the feature films do not offer any realistic study of life, and there always exists some over-emphasis on false values of life showing elaborate decorations, furnishings, and unusual wealthy atmospheres.

The feature films in majority, therefore, can only be said to provide the opportunities for fun and escape, and very rarely do they depict some social goal which can benefit the community at large. Truly speaking, the majority of Thai feature films are produced for personal profits and no attention is devoted to the needs of the audience.
APPENDIX D

Censorship Form

GOVERNMENT OF THAILAND

Board of Film Censors

This is to certify that the film entitled

................ has been passed for public exhibition restricted to adults, within the territories of Thailand to which the Motion Picture Act 1960 extends.

Applicant............................

Produced by..........................

Language of Films..................

Gauge of the films.................ft.

Number of Certificate.............

Dated......../......../........

REELS......

Signature............................

Chairman
Board of Film Censors
APPENDIX E

The Rating System

The rating system as practiced in the United States today is aimed at children's attendance. The ostensible purpose of the system as stated by the sponsoring organization is:

To give parents reliable information to enable them to make informed judgments in guiding the attendance of their children.

This laudable objective which on the face of it does not actually involve any control of film content, but would help the motion picture industry control its own product. This system is divided into four ratings as follows:

G -- General Audiences: All ages admitted. This is a film which contains no material objectionable or embarrassment to any audience in the view of the rating administrator.

PG -- Parental Guidance suggested. Some material may not be suitable for pre-teenagers. By this symbol, parents are alerted to the need for inquiry before permitting their children to attend films. A similar category had previously been marked "M" (mature) and "GP" but it was felt that these symbols were confusing. (Whether "PG" will seem
less confusing is a doubtful proposition).

**R -- Restricted:** under 17 requires accompanying parent or adult guardian. The "R" rating indicates a film which is adult in theme and treatment. Parents may wish to view the picture with their children. Schoolteachers are now considered qualified as "guardians" for purposes of this rating.

**X -- No one under 17 admitted.** This is a serious control of content for those under 17 years of age. Films in this category are considered exclusively adult in theme and treatment. In some areas of the country the age may vary from 17.

The system, however, has public advantages as well. Different films can quite properly be aimed at different audiences and the rating system reflects this approach. All can be made and shown.