

### Reverse Side of Ledger

For the first nine months of 1930 American imports of negatives amounted to 1,746,114 linear feet with a declared value of \$221,932, as against 1,926,749 feet valued at \$243,254 for the same period of 1929.

For these periods the imports of positives were respectively 3,407,355 feet valued at \$163,563, as compared with 3,764,797 feet valued at \$130,729.

In the case both of negatives and positives the total imported during the first nine months of 1930 was less than during the first nine months of 1929.

## Foreign Competition for American Pictures Grows Keener with Sound

FOREIGN competition for American motion picture films abroad, inconsiderable in the silent film days, is now assuming substantial form, in the view of the Department of Commerce's Motion Picture Division. The view was presented to the Society of Motion Picture Engineers, at its recent convention in New York, in a paper by C. J. North and N. D. Golden, chief and assistant chief of the department's subdivision, read by Mr. Golden.

"There is a widespread feeling that European producers are adapting themselves more readily to sound than they did to silent film production," said the paper, citing the increasing number of foreign sound-equipped theaters to show it is on that line the competition will have to be fought out.

"From less than 650 sound equipped theaters in the early autumn of 1929, wiring has gone ahead by leaps and bounds, with the result that Europe, exclusive of Russia, now presents a grand total of around 4950 theaters.

### Vast Increase

"Note England, for example. Its total for this time last year is set at about 400 and this has now increased to 2600. France then had 20 sound equipped houses. Now it shows nearly 350. Germany with 30 sound houses now has nearly 950. Italy has increased from 30 to 120 and Spain from 4 to 145.

"It must be remembered that the wired theaters include without exception all the largest and best equipped theaters—the ones, in fact, which supply the bulk of the revenue to the America picture companies."

For the coming year, it was revealed, German companies announce no less than 135 sound feature pictures, French companies plan 92, and between 80 and 100 will probably be made in England. In addition, sound film projects are under way in Italy, Austria, Holland, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, and Spain; and "from far-off Athens comes news that Olympia Film, a Greek producing firm, is planning the construction of a sound film studio."

### More Than Holding Own

In competition with these films in foreign languages American produc-

ers are expected to make about 150 films in German, French, and Spanish this year.

"American scenarios, technique, and directorial ingenuity will remain," the paper continued. "While it is questionable whether we again will get as large a return from non-English-speaking markets as in the silent film days, there is every prospect that we will more than hold our own even in the face of the foreign product."

American pictures are prepared for the foreign market by three methods, Mr. Golden indicated—by writing captions on the screen in the appropriate language, in pictures which have music predominant over dialogue; by "voice doubling," which means using the same picture but with the voices of foreign speakers substituted on the sound track; and by actually doing the picture in the appropriate language.

### Calcutta Exhibitors Go to Sound to Hold Customers

A REPORT comes from Assistant Trade Commissioner Wilson C. Flake, Calcutta, India, that Calcutta is installing more talking picture houses. Faced with a loss of customers who now patronize the talkers, three more theatres in Calcutta have decided to follow the lead of their competitors and install American sound equipment.

Indeed, so popular have American talking pictures become that the New Empire Theatre—the only theatre in Calcutta attended by Europeans where stage shows are produced—is among the three that are changing over to sound pictures.

The New Empire Theatre started showing pictures Nov. 1. The Madan Theatre, which hesitated to change from silent to sound pictures because of its investment in a pipe organ, will be wired soon, while the Crown Theatre has just started running talking pictures.

The Crown is the first picture house in Calcutta patronized exclusively by Indians to install sound equipment, which is evidence that the Indians are pleased with American talking pictures.

### Smaller Australian Houses Ask Film Duty Be Removed

Indications pointing to the gradual decrease in the importation of silent films in Australia have caused exhibitors and theatrical employees to ask the Federal Government to consider the complete abandonment of import duties on silent prints. It is hoped this move might cause distributors to continue to import silent films, otherwise unwired houses will require sound equipment or they will have to close up.

The present duty of 4d a foot plus the primage brings the total up to approximately 5d a foot, making the importation of silent films unprofitable for the distributor to handle.

There are about 900 houses as yet unwired and only a small percentage of this total can afford to wire. One reason for the difficulties of exhibitors of silent pictures is the fact that their houses, particularly in the country districts, have only a few performances weekly and returns do not justify sound equipment.

### Foreign Musicians Banned

The Australian Minister for Home Affairs has stated that steps have been taken to check the importation of foreign orchestras for pit and stage performance in Australia. The talkers, in addition to the present depression, have forced many musicians out of their jobs, and it is understood these steps to prohibit the entry of foreign bands have been taken to prevent further unemployment among local musicians.

### Two German Plants Install

The Jofa and Staaken studios in Germany will soon be equipped with sound recording apparatus says a Berlin message. One Tobis and three Klangfilm sets are to be installed in the Jofa studio and the installation will be completed before the end of the year. No information is available yet as to the apparatus to be installed in Staaken.

