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STATISTICS ON THE CINEMA
Methods applied in France and
other European countries

by the
CENTRE NATIONAL DE LA CINEMATOGRAPHIE, PARIS

CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
<u>0 INTRODUCTION</u>	
Film categories : entertainment, commercial, documentary, training and television films	1
<u>1 ASSEMBLY AND CONTENT OF STATISTICAL DATA</u>	
1.1 Administrative and statistical control	3
1.2 Statistics	4
Tables : items, operations, statistics obtained ..	8
<u>2 DISSEMINATION OF STATISTICS</u>	
2.1 General procedure	17
2.2 Dissemination problems	18
<u>3 THE SITUATION IN FRANCE AND ELSEWHERE</u>	
3.1 Organisations responsible for compiling statistics	22
3.2 Assembly and dissemination of statistics ...	23
<u>4 CONCLUSIONS</u>	
Advantages and limitations of a centralising body	24
- Independence of the statistician - too many figures published or too few?	
- Drawbacks due to the confidential nature of statistics - economic and technological developments - progress towards European unity and the uniformisation of cultural statistics	

APPENDICES

INTRODUCTION

1. Before embarking on a study of cinematographical statistics, something must be said about the area under review: what is meant by "cinema"? Broadly speaking, the following distinctions can be drawn:

- between the cinema as a medium of entertainment, familiar to the public, and the cinema as a medium of information and training (films for use in industry, public relations, advertising, teaching, etc.);
- within the "entertainment" category: between the commercial cinema and the non-commercial cinema (the main criterion here being the legal and fiscal status of the projection theatre);
- between the full-length film (FF) and the short film (SF), and between the 35 mm film and the 16 mm (or 8 mm) film.

2. The cost of projecting entertainment films is covered by what the individual consumer spends: in allocating a certain proportion of his purchasing power to a cinema ticket, the consumer becomes a "spectator". Non-entertainment films (documentary films and, to an even greater extent, training films) are generally offered to the spectator as a free service. The cost in this case is borne at the production end, by the sponsor who decides where and to whom the film is to be shown.

3. But the above summary does not encompass all aspects of cinematography. Some of the newer forms are growing considerably year by year: amateur film-making for example. Then there is the "free cinema" or "underground cinema", about which it is virtually impossible to obtain precise information since it disregards, and is disregarded by, all official bodies. It is an example of "spontaneous" culture in cinematographic form which is, by definition, unamenable to observation and tabulation.

4. What, then, are the areas of the film industry on which statistics are available in Europe? Our statistics are almost wholly confined to the cinema as a medium of commercial entertainment, since almost nothing is known about amateur film-making and the underground cinema. Only very few figures are available about documentary and training films, and very few about the activities of film clubs, which would appear to be on the borderline between the entertainment and documentary categories.

5. But can we, so late in the twentieth century, still talk of the film industry in terms of cinematographic projection only? We must not overlook television cinematography. In France, about 340 commercial films are screened by the ORTF each year - and in Germany the figure is over 600: thus television, in taking over from the cinema, multiplies a film's audience by 10. Nor can we overlook the fact that in the near future films will be available in cassette form or brought to each household by a cable television network. Similarly, a system is being developed whereby films can be shown "to order" in hotel bedrooms.

This being so, how are cinematographical statistics obtained in France (principally on commercial and entertainment films)?

See Chapter I

ASSEMBLY AND CONTENT OF STATISTICAL DATA

1.1 Administrative and statistical control

1. The assembly of statistical data on cinematography in France (relating almost exclusively to films in the entertainment category, although some statistics are available on the activities of film clubs) is the responsibility of a single organisation, namely the Centre National de la Cinématographie, whose Information Department specialises in compiling and disseminating statistics. The availability of so much statistical information is a direct consequence of the existence of one fairly large administrative unit dealing specifically with the cinema.

2. For the past thirty years or so, the French film industry has been subject to specific control exercised, in chronological order, by:

- (a) Comité d'Organisation de l'Industrie Cinématographique, "COIC" (from 1940-44, under the Occupation),
- (b) Office Professionnel du Cinéma, "OPC" (after the Liberation),
- (c) Centre National de la Cinématographie, "CNC" (since 1 January 1947).

3. All professional makers of entertainment films are thus subject to a fairly extensive set of rules and regulations (1) under which the controlling body is given considerable statutory and coercive powers. The CNC is a State public institution of an administrative character, set up under the Act of 25 October 1946; it is financially autonomous, receives subscriptions from the film-making companies and comes under the authority of the Minister responsible for the film industry (since 1958, the Minister of Cultural Affairs).

(See Annexe No. 1)

4. The assembly of statistics on the cinema in France is a very important part of this centralised administrative function, especially as the Act specifically states that the CNC shall be responsible for "statistical observations" in connection with the film industry.

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(1) In addition to the Code de l'Industrie Cinématographique, the "Recueil des Textes du cinéma français" lists over 350 decrees, orders and statutory decisions.

1.2 Statistics

5. Statistics on cinematography in France, which are not all of equal value or of equal importance, cover the field set out in Table 0.

6. The most important statistics, and also the fullest and most accurate, are those on exhibition; they follow the progress of the motion picture market as closely as possible, and are the basis of very nearly all surveys. Compiling these statistics is a complex procedure, the basis of which is the system known as box-office auditing, whereby the cinema manager is required to draw up a statement of box-office takings after every programme (see Annexe No. 2).

7. The CNC receives the box-office statements and processes them by a punched card system or by computer. In this way it is possible:

- to gain an extremely accurate knowledge of trends in the French motion picture market, partly for the purpose of compiling statistics for publication, but also as a basis for all other professional and administrative activities;
- to supply data on a film's commercial success to various interested parties wishing to check for compliance with contract terms;
- to calculate the total surcharge collected by the theatres entitled to aid grants;
- to calculate the aid grants payable to the film makers;
- to calculate subscriptions due to the CNC by the motion picture companies;
- to calculate the various categories of compensatory subsidies introduced concurrently with the application of the value-added tax, and the bonuses associated with the screening of short films;
- to provide the Ministry of Finance with the data needed for calculating the amount to be paid to the local authorities in place of the entertainment tax which was abolished when the value-added tax was introduced.

8. Between the time the box-office statement is taken out of the envelope and the time it is filed under the name of the theatre, the following operations are performed:

- a note is made of the week in which the film was shown;
- a visual check is made to ensure that all the required information has been given;
- the figures are checked on calculating machines;

- a record is kept of the code numbers of the distributor, the feature film, the supporting film and the newsreel;
- most of the information contained on the statement is transferred to a punched card (code number of theatre, region, year, week, number of showings, number of spectators, takings, profit on programme, hire fee, profit on newsreel, distributor's code number, code numbers of feature film and supporting films, aid grant surcharge).

9. The box-office statements are received in random order. After the above operations (that is, after four or five weeks) statements bearing the same theatre code number are put together and stored for five years in that theatre's file.

10. The data thus obtained must be processed in the appropriate manner. This is achieved by using the punched card as a replica of the box-office statement, and introducing it into appropriate machines which perform the various operations producing the results listed above.

11. It is essential for each data processing operation to cover all the programmes within a given period, which might be the cinematographic week and, later, the quarter. Before beginning an operation, it is therefore necessary to wait until the maximum possible number of statements for the period in question have been recorded on punched cards. Any statements not received by the mandatory date are chased up by means of a machine-standardised reminder form.

12. The CNC is shortly to install a computer to replace the conventional punched-card equipment, which is beginning to prove inadequate. (Some operations are already being performed on a hired computer.) The Centre will then be able to process its data and publish the results much more quickly.

13. Information can be treated in this way only if the box-office statements are returned quickly and punctually. Unless all the statements are taken into account, the information collected will be incomplete and will not give a true picture. If statements are sent in late or are incorrectly made out and have to be returned, processing and all subsequent operations are delayed, and it is the profession as a whole that suffers.

14. The CNC therefore does all in its power to ensure that all cinema managers, throughout the year, return their statements within five days of the end of the cinematographic week (time-limit fixed by Ministerial Decree of 14 April 1972).

For preparing the punched cards, it is important that there should be no error or omission, so that there is no need to return the statement or request further information (1).

15. The entire machinery for processing figures of box-office takings, from the consumer (cinema audience) to the public (dissemination of information on the motion picture market) via the statistician (Data Processing and Information Departments of the CNC) and the parties concerned within the profession (distributor, producer, etc.) is described in Table C2 and illustrated diagrammatically in Annexe No. 3.

16. The other statistics covering the other sectors of the film industry are less complex to prepare and are generally drawn up by the various administrative departments of the CNC and passed on to the Information Department. These are described in Tables C1, C3, C4, C5 and C6.

17. Special mention must be made of the psychological and sociological data obtained by opinion survey (Table C1, paragraph 1.6): the assembly of this information is not one of the CNC's functions (although the CNC initiates, supervises and finances such surveys before disseminating the results). The information thus obtained is equally valuable: it is a necessary complement to that obtained by conventional statistical methods.

18. One should not overlook the effect of the development of television on the motion picture market: television competes with the cinema, but at the same time provides films with a new outlet. Consequently, there is a search for statistics giving an accurate picture of this phenomenon: these include the number of television receivers in operation and other related data (not to mention the audience ratings of televised films). The ORTF supplies statistics on television in France. But here again, psychological and sociological surveys can provide valuable information which cannot be obtained in any other way. The "television factor" was therefore included in the four market search surveys conducted for the CNC by specialised firms.

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(1) Inspection and sanctions:

- theatres are inspected without warning by attested officials of the CNC;
- any "offences" or "unlawful practices" are penalised (fines, closure orders, legal proceedings);
- failure to return the box-office statement may be considered as an unlawful practice.

19. The cinema is only one form of recreational activity among many others; it is therefore necessary to make a list of its numerous competitors and compile appropriate statistics on such items as expenditure on motoring and travel, hotels, camping and holidays generally, and expenditure on private audio-visual equipment (tape-recorders, record players, hi-fi systems, cine-cameras and projectors for amateur use, snap-shot cameras, etc.).

CINEMATOGRAPHY IN FRANCE

TABLE 0

CNC STATISTICS

<u>General</u>	<u>Cinematography</u>
<u>G</u>	<u>C</u>
G1 - <u>Population</u>	C1 - <u>General data</u>
G2 - <u>Consumption</u>	C11 - Censorship
G3 - <u>Entertainments</u> (other than the cinema) and expenditure on recreation	C12 - Financing (appropriations, aid grants, etc.)
	C13 - Taxation
	C14 - Labour
	C15 - Cultural cinematography
	C16 - Market research surveys
NB - In this field the data are collected and collated by the Information Department of the CNC. The Department makes use of all French and foreign documentary information that comes its way and keeps in touch with other research workers and field investigation teams (both in France and abroad).	C2 - <u>Exploitation</u> Cinema managements and the motion picture market in France
	C3 - <u>Distribution</u> Distributors, films, programmes
	C4 - <u>Production</u> Producers, films, industries Techniques
	C5 - <u>Export</u> Revenue and films
	C6 - <u>Miscellaneous</u> Foreign cinematography, Television, etc.

<u>Item</u>	<u>GENERAL DATA</u> <u>Operations</u>	<u>TABLE C1</u> <u>Statistics obtained</u>
1.1 SUPERVISION OF FILMS	Every film, whether French or foreign, must be certified by the Control Commission	Number of certificates issued to French and foreign films
1.2 FINANCING AND AID	Permission to shoot; automatic selective payment of aid grant (advance on takings)	Statistics on financing (collected at the stage of official administrative procedure before shooting)
1.3 TAXATION	CNC supervisory function (for tax equalisation in particular)	Breakdown of total takings of French motion picture theatres
1.4 LABOUR	Compulsory possession of CNC professional identity card for certain occupations	Statistics on the number of professional identity cards per occupational category
1.5 CULTURAL ACTIVITY	Federation of registered film clubs supplying the CNC with statements	Number of film clubs Number of members Number of shows and spectators
1.6 MARKET RESEARCH SURVEYS	The CNC uses the services of a specialised research institute	Attendance statistics relating to data not included in the box office statements returned to the CNC : age, housing, socio-professional category, sex, days of attendance, taste, etc.

NB : The basic data for these statistics are passed on by various sub-divisions of the CNC. (Production and Technical Industries Sub-division, Film Supervision Department, etc.) to the Information Department.

Frequency: annual, unless otherwise stated

EXPLOITATION STATISTICS

TABLE C2

<u>Item</u>	<u>Operations</u>	<u>Statistics obtained</u>	<u>Breakdown</u>
2.1 THEATRES	Licences to operate; theatre census	Number of theatres	By region, department, town, type of theatre
2.2 TICKETS SOLD	Check of takings by CNC.	Audience (number of admissions)	By theatre, town, department, region (Q + W) France (Q + W)
		Takings and components thereof, price of admission, number of shows	By theatre, town, department, region (Q + W) France (Q + W)

NB : The basic data for these statistics are passed on by the "Exploitation Distribution" Sub-division to the Information Department.

Frequency: annual, unless otherwise stated,

for example: Q = quarterly

W = weekly

The basis on which the CNC collects the information (namely, results per programme and per theatre) makes it possible to perform all the operations of sorting punched cards that are required for the compilation of detailed statistics of all kinds:

- film careers
- results according to type of theatre
- results according to prices
- results according to number of shows
- results according to age of film, etc.

ECONOMIC STATISTICS

TABLE C2
(contd)

Breakdown according to "Space" and "Time" criteria

Space \ Time	Week (1)	Quarter (2)	Year (3)
1. <u>FRANCE</u>	= S + FB/ Graph	.....	= Qe (S + Rb) according to Rb + Pm + SS
2. <u>REGIONS</u> (cinema- tographic)	= S + Rb + SS + PS	= S + RS + Pm/Nation	
3. <u>REGIONAL ACTION</u> <u>AREA</u>	.....	.....	= S + Rb + Qe, etc.
4. <u>DEPARTEMENTS</u>	= S + Rb .....	.....	= S + Rb Nation
5. <u>PARIS:</u> ("Local" picture houses) ("Pre-release" theatres)	.....	.....	= S + Rb Nation
6. <u>LARGE TOWNS</u> (1) over 100,000 inhabitants	.....	.....	= S + Rb + Qe, etc.
7. <u>TOWNS</u> (2) over 60,000 inhabitants	= S + Rb .....	.....	= S + Rb + Qe, etc.
8. <u>THEATRES</u>	.....	.....	= S + Rb Pm (x)

(1) Large towns, plus population ranges of 20 to 30,000, 30 to 50,000 and 50 to 100,000 (typewritten).

(2) Towns, plus population ranges of 5 to 10,000, 20 to 30,000 and 30 to 60,000 (typewritten).

K E YPRINCIPAL STATISTICAL DATA (Column 3)

- S : Number of spectators (paying) admitted to motion picture theatres
- Rb : Revenue from those spectators
- Pm : Average price of admission = $\frac{Rb}{S}$
- Qe : Number of theatres functioning
- SS : Number of shows per week in the motion picture theatres (new item, compiled by the CNC since 1964)
- PS : Number of programmes per week in the theatres
- Graph : The statistics in question are published in graph form
- Nation : The statistics in question provide operating results according to nationality
- (x) : Statistics compiled by the CNC but not for publication (Act relating to the confidential nature of "individual" statistics).

DISTRIBUTION STATISTICS

TABLE C3

<u>Item</u>	<u>Operations</u>	<u>Statistics obtained</u>	<u>Breakdown</u>
3.1 DISTRIBUTORS	No distribution company is set up without the authorisation of the CNC which establishes a "pedigree" file for each distributor	Companies = number = turnover	Authorised/active categories by region, by category, by nationality
3.2 FILMS	Processing of box-office statements sent to the CNC by theatre managers	Films (FF) = number	by nationality by region by category

NB : The basic data for these statistics are passed on by the "Exploitation-Distribution" Sub-division of the CNC to the Information Department.

PRODUCTION STATISTICS

TABLE C4

<u>Item</u>	<u>Operations</u>	<u>Statistics obtained</u>	<u>Breakdown</u>
4.1 PRODUCERS	No production company (SF or FF) is set up without the authorisation of the CNC which establishes a "pedigree" file for each producer.	Companies = number	Authorised/active of FF/SF
4.2 FILMS	No film is made without the authorisation of the CNC which keeps the film's "pedigree" index card.	Films = number = directors	of FF/SF (Q) of FF = fr. 100% copro. (Q) copro = major/ minor = by country Authorised/active
4.3 COST	The film's financing schedule and cost estimate are forwarded to the CNC in support of the application for permission to shoot	= cost	FF/SF (Q) FF = total/average (Q) = capital fr/foreign (Q) = subsidy = estimate as % SF = total = State contribution
4.4 STUDIOS (1)	Statement to CNC on occupation of sets	Number of days/sets and percentage of occupation	Entertainment films, TV films, publicity films, foreign films

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(1) Supplied by the Chambres Syndicales des Industries Techniques

NB : The basic data for these statistics are passed on by the "Production and Technical Industries" Sub-division of the CNC to the Information Department.

Frequency: annual, unless otherwise stated
Q = quarterly.

EXPORT STATISTICS

TABLE C5

<u>Item</u>	<u>Operations</u>	<u>Statistics obtained</u>	<u>Breakdown</u>
5.1 EXPORTERS	No film export company can be set up without the authorisation of the CNC, which establishes a "pedigree" file for each exporter.	Number of companies	
5.2 CONTRACTS	Export contracts certified by the CNC; Import contracts certified by the Office des Changes	Number of contracts Number of contracts	FF/SF by country FF/SF by country
5.3 INCOME FROM EXPORTS	Declaration to CNC on obtaining the export certificate	Amount of income (future)	by country and by geographical and monetary zone
	Declaration of production quotas on foreign income	Amount of income (actual)	

NB : The basic data for these statistics are passed on by the "Foreign Relations" and "Data Processing" Departments of the CNC to the Information Department.

MISCELLANEOUS STATISTICS

TABLE C6

- 6.1 - This heading is mainly concerned with foreign film statistics obtained either
- . by analysing foreign film journals and yearbooks, or
 - . by studying the reports of French commercial Attachés abroad and the representatives of Unifrance Film.

All statistics are assembled, processed and disseminated by the Information Department of the CNC.

- 6.2 - Assembly of television statistics for comparison with statistics on cinematography:
- . number of receivers in operation (ORTF records)
 - . number of cinema films broadcast on television (by nationality, channel and programme slot).

Statistics compiled by the CNC Information Department (in co-operation with the ORTF).

DISSEMINATION OF STATISTICS

2.1 General procedure

1. French film statistics are disseminated in various forms:

Small-scale
distribution

Statistical Yearbook
of the French cinema

= Statistics on
looseleaf pages
published
throughout the
year as and when
they are
established by
the Information
Department of
the CNC.

Large-scale
distribution

CNC Information
Bulletin

= 10,000 copies of
this journal are
distributed every
two months to all
members of the
profession and to
a number of
French and foreign
organisations and
individual
readers. It
comprises a very
full statistical
section,
illustrated with
numerous graphs.

Annual Stock-taking
Report of the film
industry (supplement
to the CNC Bulletin)

= Independent
brochure of about
30 pages giving
the main data:
production,
distribution,
exploitation,
export, censor-
ship, regions;
with brief
summary of the
past ten years'
activities
(11,000 copies).

<u>Restricted</u> <u>distribution:</u>	Statistical Newsflash ("Série Rapide")	=	Provisional figures (including quarterly trade figures of the French market) published at the time of processing for the attention of the leading authorities in the French film industry.
	Miscellaneous statistics in type- script or photostat form.	=	Data of interest to a small number of people, supplied on request whenever facilities are available.

2. Each set of statistics, whether published in the Yearbook or not, bears an identification consisting of the year plus a serial number in ascending order. The Yearbook was published for the first time in 1953 and now stretches to 17 volumes; nevertheless, it does not contain all the statistics available to the Information Department. It takes approximately 45 days to process information on the trade figures in France. Thus in any year, the trade figures for the first quarter - provisional, but fairly close to the final figures - become available on:

31 March + 45 days = mid-May

for publication in the form of a newsflash.

3. The final figures for a given year "N", whether they are recapitulatory or broken down according to various parameters (nationality of films screened, region, town, price of seat, year of release, etc.) become available from the month of June of the following year (N + 6 months) while production - and, wherever possible, dissemination - takes place between June and October.

2.2 Dissemination problems

4. The dissemination of film statistics by the CNC comprises two aspects: firstly, routine dissemination (under the mandate conferred on the CNC by the legislature) and secondly, additional or occasional dissemination (in response to individual requests).

5. The CNC is not the only administrative body to compile statistics by virtue of the supervisory powers conferred on it. Statistics are in fact a by-product of almost any administrative function. But there is a direct relationship between the type of administrative body and the type of statistics it produces. For example, a tax department which inspects the turnover of the companies of a certain type and calculates the tax proceeds is at least in a position to work out the value, if not the volume, of sales in the sector under review. Regrettably, but not surprisingly considering that it is not the specific duty of the department in question to compile statistics, any statistics that do happen to be compiled tend to be extremely limited in scope and to contain very few breakdowns; the question of rapid dissemination simply does not arise. Statistical information in this case is merely incidental: it is not necessarily published and made available to the general public.

6. It is quite a different matter where the CNC is concerned. True, the CNC performs an administrative function of a general nature, but it has been specifically given the task of compiling statistics on the profession that it administers; we shall now see how it sets about doing this.

7. The statistics are compiled in the manner described in Chapter 1. They are then disseminated by the CNC which has special facilities for the purpose. One of the specialised departments of the CNC (the Information Department) is responsible for issuing various publications. The most important of these is the bi-monthly "CNC Information Bulletin". This journal was first produced and distributed in 1947, but since that time its appearance, content and manner of distribution have changed considerably (1). It is distributed among professional circles in France, in particular to theatre managers (one can consider that the supply of information is complementary to the oversight exercised by the CNC) and also to a large number of non-professional readers, including journalists (whether or not they have special interest in the cinema), parliamentarians, civil servants, public figures and various institutions more remotely associated with the film industry. Outside France, the Bulletin is sent to organisations with similar status to that of the CNC, as well as to Ministries that have a film section, employers' associations, trade unions, institutions concerned with cinematography, and all the major film journals in the world. The Information Department of the CNC receives in exchange most of the foreign film journals, and these provide an important source of information. The CNC Bulletin contains articles on the various aspects of cinematography both in France and abroad. The largest section is that on statistics; these are made easier to understand by the addition of maps and graphs.

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(1) To be precise, the change took place on 1 January 1953 when an Information Department was first set up within the CNC.

8. Another publication of the CNC, distributed somewhat less widely, is the Statistical Yearbook (or "Annexe" to the CNC Information Bulletin); it is concerned entirely with statistics and takes the form of a loose-leaf binder. As soon as any statistics have been compiled by the competent division, examined and published by the Information Department, they are made available to the public in this way. In all, 400 copies are sent on request to individual readers, professionals or otherwise, in France and abroad. There remains the financial side: are the publications distributed free or for payment? The CNC Bulletin can be sold (15 F for 6 issues, including one extra issue plus the Stocktaking Report), but as all professionals are entitled to free copies, few people actually pay for it. The Statistical Yearbook, on the other hand, costs 30 F a year; this includes the binder.

9. Two additional publications, complementary to the above, are issued by the Information Department of the CNC: the Statistical Newsflash ("Série Rapide") and the annual Stocktaking Report on cinematography in France.

10. Like the other statistics, those of the "Série Rapide" are printed by the offset process, but with red page-headings. The purpose is to meet the demand for virtually instantaneous dissemination. The statistics are mainly concerned with the quarterly development of the national market (audiences, box-office takings, average price of admission). They are issued 40 or 45 days after the end of the quarter under review. Fewer copies are printed than for the Statistical Yearbook (blue page-headings), and apart from the CNC itself, they are mainly intended for professional organisations in France and for journalists. Obviously, one consequence of this high-speed service is extreme simplification: the statistics are deliberately unadorned, consisting almost entirely of figures, without any comment on economic developments.

11. The annual Stocktaking Report was first published in 1958 as an experiment and was soon an unqualified success. Despite a number of alterations over the years, in substance as well as in form, it has remained sufficiently "standardised" in appearance to be readily accessible to research workers and other users. The Stocktaking Report at present takes the form of a two-colour, 36-page printed document containing tables of figures (going back 10 years), some graphs, and texts describing some of the major machinery. The success of this report has been such that the readers tend to give it preference over the other publications, for example the Yearbook, but what matters is, surely, that the CNC's duty to inform is carried out in the most effective manner possible.

12. Where the "occasional" publications are concerned, it must be understood that they concern statistics supplied on request for a particular study (economic statistics are, as we have seen, disseminated automatically to a large number of readers). The requests may come either from professional circles, newspapers and non-official circles generally (external demand), or from the government itself: for example, the Minister responsible for the cinema (internal demand).

13. The external demand can be satisfied in so far as it does not contravene the law on the confidential nature of statistics (which makes it illegal to publish any so-called individual statistics, such as the turnover of a particular company) and, of course, in so far as the statistics in question are available (although not disseminated as a matter of routine) or obtainable by the competent department of the CNC.

14. The procedure for restricted distribution is adopted either when the CNC receives a written request (which is answered in the shortest possible time) or when the enquirer approaches the CNC directly - which is preferable in the case of a subject requiring more detailed explanations. Apart from the government, the enquirers are mostly professional cinematographers seeking fuller information than the published records can provide, or journalists, or individual students or research workers who have chosen the cinema or an area connected with cinematography as a research topic. The head of the CNC Information Department has been called upon in the past to act as Director of Studies for a particular student, and to sit on the examining board. Where the internal demand is concerned - originating almost exclusively in the General Directorate of the CNC and the Ministry responsible for the cinema - the information is usually intended as a basis for decisions to be made at governmental level.

THE SITUATION IN FRANCE AND ELSEWHERE

3.1 Organisations responsible for compiling statistics

1. What systems are adopted for compiling film statistics in the main European countries, and how do they compare with those in France? It must first be pointed out that, in other countries too, the area under study is almost wholly confined to the commercial and entertainment categories. We shall first try to discover who is responsible for compiling statistics and then describe how information is assembled and disseminated.

2. While most countries have a government department responsible for the cinema (generally attached to a Ministry) there seems to be no exact replica of the French CNC, a virtually autonomous administrative body with extensive powers. The nearest equivalent would seem to be the Nederlandsche Bioscoop Bond (NBB), which has been in existence in the Netherlands since 1918; the difference is that its members are not civil servants but professional people associated in a kind of State-authorized cartel.

But if we consider the system of statistical observation (concerned with the motion picture "market" and "exploitation" aspects, and not production) the nearest analogy is the Italian Society of Authors and Publishers (SIAE); although here again it is not a government department but an organisation under private law (with, it is true, a mandate from the Ministry of Finance since 1924, to calculate the amount of entertainment tax). In other countries, such as Great Britain, Spain and Belgium, statistics are compiled by a government department with responsibility for the cinema; in the Federal Republic of Germany, Austria and Sweden the work is done by a professional body. Action is, however, blurred by the fact that the aid institutes (in Germany and Sweden) from which statistics can be obtained exist only by virtue of an act of parliament and depend on the collection of a tax which under French law would be considered para-fiscal; and in Austria, the Cinematography Association receives a State subsidy.

4. A number of other organisations and institutions should also be mentioned, since, in addition to their administrative functions, they are able to supply statistics which, even though they concern only the film production aspect, are nevertheless useful (from a cultural standpoint as well). These include the censorship boards; some are State controlled (as in France) and others are run by the members of the profession (as in Germany): in either case their first concern is to produce a list of films, foreign or otherwise, that can be screened in the country concerned. In some cases these are the only such lists that exist, and are therefore all the more valuable. They also offer criteria for a critical appraisal of the films in question (for instance, for the protection of young people).

3.2 Assembly and dissemination of statistics

5. Statistics are assembled and disseminated in various ways according to the nature of the organisation responsible for the cinema. If we consider the "market" (that is to say trade figures as opposed to the "production" stage) we find, for example:

- in ITALY: a system of inspection similar to the French system (the SIAE employs 6,000 inspectors in some 1,500 agencies), hence a marked similarity in the statistics obtained and published;
- in SPAIN: a system similar to, and in fact recently copied from, the French system;
- in GERMANY: statistics that are severely limited because there is no strict legal obligation to provide them: the situation has improved somewhat since 1 January 1968 when the Financial Aid Act came into force and a Financial Aid Institute was set up;
- in GREAT BRITAIN: statistics which, although required by law in a general way, contain very few breakdowns.

There is, then, a fundamental difference between countries that can be described as well-equipped and those that are less so: in the former (France and Italy) statistics are obtainable for the smallest units of place (the theatre) and time (the programme and the week) whereas in the latter they are less precise (in Great Britain and Germany, for example, the results cover a whole month, and no statistics are available for each individual film or programme).

6. Statistics on film production are poorer and less reliable than those on the "market" aspect, even in the well-equipped countries (either because they are less detailed or because there is less certainty about them, or both). In some countries they are even rudimentary, especially where the "financing" aspects are concerned (see Annexe No. 4).

C O N C L U S I O N S

1. If one examines the machinery with which the CNC compiles statistics on films in the entertainment and commercial category, the following features stand out: it produces copious, accurate data and disseminates them rapidly over a wide area.

- Assembly of information (where the motion picture market is concerned) relates to the smallest possible unit of time (the film and the programme) and of space (the motion picture theatre); as the process of information retrieval is based on the same units, the statistician and research worker can perform any number of permutations.
- The time taken to compile and disseminate statistics (again, on the market aspect) is cut down to a minimum (45 days for Paris, 6 months elsewhere).
- The reliability of the published figures can be considered, with very few exceptions, as excellent, and the same applies to the publicity that they are given.

2. This success is due to the fact that the CNC:

- is a public administrative body,
- has responsibility for the area under review,
- has a specific mandate to assemble and disseminate statistics,
- possesses a specialised department for the purpose.

Furthermore, the duties of the information department are not confined strictly to statistics but cover a far wider range of activities from the provision of purely documentary information to contacts with the press and a wide variety of outside organisations and persons, both in France and abroad.

3. It is without doubt this wider sphere of action which makes the work of the Information Department of the CNC very effective in another essential field of analysis, namely the surveys conducted by specialised institutions involving psychological and sociological field investigations. These studies are essential for counteracting the impersonal nature of the information obtained by going through the theatre trade figures, however elaborate and accurate they may be. But all such studies, and the firms conducting them, must be supervised and a close watch kept on the validity and cost of the inquiry. For how could a market research institute possibly have sufficient prior knowledge of the area under review to draw up the best possible questionnaire in the shortest possible time? It is true to say

that in Paris the Information Department of the CNC steps in before and after the inquiry and leads the band all the time. Prior to the inquiry, it provides the market research team with all the necessary guidance (not only all the statistics of the current series but, if need be, statistics compiled specially for the investigation) and describes the context into which the survey must be fitted, whether in France or abroad. In this way no time is lost and the specialists can draw up the questionnaire best suited to the matter under investigation. While the inquiry is being conducted, the CNC simply checks that the time limits are observed, but immediately afterwards it steps in again to co-operate with the research workers in making a critical appraisal of the results and drafting the final composite report. Subsequently, all the distribution facilities available to the Information Department are brought into service (1).

4. However, the service is provided by the CNC in the assembly of statistics is not without its faults and limitations:

- it covers almost exclusively the commercial and entertainment category (although unlike some countries such as Germany and Great Britain, it does possess some information on film clubs); training films and documentary films fall almost entirely outside its sphere, and the same is true of tele-recordings (films produced for television but likely to be shown subsequently in commercial cinemas);
- it is much less reliable when dealing with the production aspect of films than with the exploitation aspect;
- it is incapable of providing information on the film industry's labour force, many members of which perform a variety of functions and are therefore difficult to pin down.

Two other fields which naturally escape the notice of the CNC are amateur cinematography and the "underground" cinema. In fact, where the exploitation aspect of films is concerned (unlike the production stage) the CNC has virtually given up compiling statistics on cinematographic work produced only on 16 mm film and not 35 mm. It is also true that the CNC, in producing its statistics, has been motivated mainly, though not solely, by an economic ideal - expansion of the film industry - more than by any cultural considerations.

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(1) The CNC has commissioned several market research studies, the last two being in 1970 (by IFOP) and in 1965 (by SEMA/SOFRES); examples from abroad include the INFRATEST and DICHTER surveys in Germany commissioned by the Filmförderungsanstalt in 1971, and a survey commissioned in Great Britain by the Association of Film Producers.

5. What conclusions can be drawn from this survey? It is clear, first of all, that there is much to be gained by instituting a specialised and centralising organisation. In countries where no such instrument or administrative body yet exists and cannot be set up, an attempt should be made to achieve the same results using the existing systems. But there is a danger here. When a statistics institute operates under the auspices of an organisation (the State, for instance) whose task is to formulate and apply a certain policy for the sector concerned, the statistician may sometimes be subjected to certain pressures. The situation is not unknown where the publication of a particular figure would contradict certain motions or dash certain hopes, and is for that reason considered embarrassing. Undoubtedly, sacrifices do sometimes have to be made to the requirements of political action, and one can understand that it may be found necessary, at a particular time, to restrict the flow of information. But there can be no excuse for imposing such a restriction for more than a short period, and still less for giving a political slant, deliberately or otherwise, to the comment accompanying the figures.

6. Such a state of affairs could not continue indefinitely, since all political action and discussions affecting a particular sector look ultimately to statistics for endorsement: what help would the figures be if they had lost their credibility, and how much credibility would be left if the public sensed that someone was tampering with them? For this reason alone, it is clear that, ultimately, the best policy is to publish the same statistics, at the same periods, presented in the same way and accompanied by only such comments as are strictly necessary for understanding the figures. There is no other way to inspire confidence. There is a further reason besides: regular distribution and standardised appearance make the tables easier to "digest" by those for whom they are intended. The rest is up to the users who may, after all, ask for any further explanations they may need; statistics, it has been said, are no substitute for intelligence (1). However that may be, the independence of the statistician is a problem, and no solution is likely to be found unless we face up to it squarely.

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(1) André SIEGFRIED

7. The following question may also be asked: If some countries do not publish enough statistics, are there not others which publish too many? If so, the users are likely to find the flood of information more of a nuisance than a help. While this is indeed a pitfall, and a very real one, one should think straight away of the drawbacks of the opposite situation: at what stage must the brake be applied? How can the useful information be separated from the superfluous? How can the distributors claim to know in advance what the users need, considering that their clients are such a mixed bunch? In fact the answer probably is to disseminate - or make available - as many data as possible (chiefly in the form of tables) and at the same time to publish a document setting out in a concise manner the essential facts about the area under review. In this way specialists will have access to all the details and refinements that the available figures contain, while the more general public (the specialists too, for that matter) can be offered a coherent digest of the principala data together with a commentary to make them easier to assimilate.

8. A further problem is that of secrecy. There may be legal provisions - and most countries apparently have them - banning the publication of certain statistics, about a particular firm or product for example. It is also conceivable that professional people may simply be reluctant to supply information about their business, even to a professional body of which they are members. If the publication of so-called "individual" statistics were made a voluntary matter, something approaching economic perspecuity - generally recognised as being highly desirable - might be achieved.

9. Another factor must also be taken into consideration because it has a direct bearing on the speed of assembly and distribution of statistics, and, for that matter, on their validity. This is the development of the economic situation and of technology. Taking the cinema as an example, one finds that the continuous downward trend of the market quickly invalidates figures - for instance, the number of picture theatres - which in other circumstances showed a degree of stability. Similarly, the introduction of new techniques may remove much of the significance of figures that were formerly used without hesitation (for instance, creativity and innovation may appear to be on the decline from the standpoint of the conventional cinema, whereas from the standpoint of television, they are undergoing rapid development). This, broadly speaking, means that evolving situations and the commercial and technological strategies that arise out of those situations should be equalled by equal flexibility on the part of the statisticians in keeping up with events; no doubt this aim is difficult to achieve, especially as the changing situations and the people who bring them about take less kindly than others to the inquisitor's scrutiny. But this is only one more reason - and not one less - for facing the problem squarely, as this is the only way to ensure that statistical information will remain fully efficacious.

10. Finally, we must consider the consequences of the progress our countries are making towards European unity. These consequences are felt particularly strongly by the members of the EEC because the EEC is an institutional common market, in the process of enlargement. In film-making, an area of culture which is also an industry, the phenomenon has been felt with particular keenness: to create a film industry with economic and legal structures that are genuinely European, figures were required, and these figures had to speak the same language regardless of national boundaries. Some years after the Treaty of Rome was signed, the undersigned advocated a meeting of cinema statisticians from all Common Market countries. The purpose was to seek to standardise professional criteria and the presentation of tables and to secure the adoption of a minimum annual joint work programme. Although the Statistical Office of the EEC agreed in principle, it finally proved impossible to hold the Conference for practical reasons. It is obvious that as all the cinematographic activities within the EEC gradually become liberated (an example of this progress is the forthcoming setting-up of a public film register in each Common Market country) it will be more necessary, and perhaps in some ways easier, to co-ordinate the machinery for compiling statistics on cinematography in the ten countries.

11. This being so, it is not unjustifiable to assume that any progress made in this respect by the ten partners is bound to extend to the other countries, and that all improvements in the statistical machinery, although geared to the economic aspects of the cinema, would be equally beneficial to all those who seek to make the film an instrument of cultural development.

One last word: in view of the need to acquire a fuller knowledge of each sector in turn (cinema, theatre, music, reading, artists) through the medium of statistics, it might be in the interests of a more effective cultural policy to try to establish some degree of uniformity between the statistics in those areas. With the Stockholm Symposium and the action of the Council of Europe, some progress will perhaps be made in that direction.

C. DEGAND
Paris, 13 July 1972