

# 'Local Films — A Reality 11

## Years Ago'

By

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HELPING the people of Jamaica to a fuller life through the field of Audio Visual education strikes one at first glance as a brand new idea in Jamaica when in truth and in fact the technical know how and equipment for the production of educational films out here has been a reality for the past eleven years.

Films dealing with the major social problems of health, agriculture and education were all thought of at the time and a picture showing the planting of a Citrus tree was produced with the full co-operation of the Agricultural Department with Captain A. F. Thelwell in the leading role in order to prove to the Government of Jamaica that films of this nature could be produced locally.

The film was a great success and highly praised by local Government officials; however the effort to secure a small grant for continuing this work was never obtained from Government.

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I AM sure the plan of the Colonial Film Unit to start a training school here is welcomed, especially if most of the cost of this project is to be borne by the already overburdened British taxpayer. No doubt the Imperial Government has good reasons for this move, however we in Jamaica are sufficiently advanced technically to produce pictures of this nature if funds for the project can be obtained from our local Government.

Surely those in local Government who are interested and the general public at large should remember the steady progress which has been made over the past eleven years in producing motion pictures locally.

Some outstanding featurettes, in addition to the Citrus film, were Jamaica Screen Magazine showing the industries of Jamaica, The Life Of A Thoronghbred depicting the breeding of horses and the Sport of Kings in Jamaica also the four featurettes which I was commissioned to produce during the war for the Imperial Government, namely The Gate At Gibraltar, Among The Many, Jamaica Prepared and Alert To The End.

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MANY articles have appeared in local press from time to time stressing the ability of local photographers, technicians, dialogue and script writers who are quite capable of producing what is required. Surely we all remember the instructional film "Adult Suffrage and The Secret Ballot" produced by me for Mr. A. J. Pelletier, former Census and chief Electoral Officer of the island.

This featurette proved conclusively the dynamic force of Audio-Visual education in cases where knowledge has to be disseminated and absorbed in the shortest possible time.

In view of those facts why should it be necessary for us in Jamaica to woo, encourage and to beg for foreign capital on an important enterprise such as this for the betterment and the enlightenment of our population?

In conclusion I quote from a letter form Mr. Easter the then Director of Education written as far back as 1940:

"The matter of the making of local films is proceeding in various directions. We have also applied for financial assistance and as soon as things get really moving I shall let you know".

Headlines from the Gleaner of December 2, 1949—"Local Films A Year Hence, Says Film Head After Survey". Is this then the long awaited answer to Mr. Easter's letter of 1940? O Tempora, O Mores!

Why did not the Jamaica Government set aside a few thousand pounds for this indespensible project and why do we as Jamaicans fail to appreciate and acknowledge our existing local talent? Let it not be said in the future that the production of educational films in Jamaica was not a reality before the coming of the Colonial Film Unit.