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Empire Films. EDWARD DAVSON..

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## EMPIRE FILMS.

### TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—Two subjects of importance which are being considered by the Imperial Conference are the development of Empire trade and the encouragement of emigration to the Dominions. There is a method of assisting both these problems which, though small in itself, may contain great possibilities for good : I mean the utilization of the cinematograph film as an instrument for disseminating knowledge both here and overseas. We wish to educate our people, both adult and young, in an appreciation and knowledge of our Dominions and Colonies, of their scenery and the life of their people, of their industries and products. Further, when we are inviting the men and women of this country to emigrate to new lands, we should be able to put before them the conditions and surroundings of their prospective homes. Fortunately the means of doing so have become very simple.

It is probably known that photographers are now travelling east, west, and south to make films of various parts of the Empire for exhibition at Wembley. These will represent the greatest collection of geographical films that has ever been made, and it would be regrettable if, in a year's time, they were scattered or destroyed. I suggest that an organization should be formed, possibly under the auspices of the Imperial Institute, to take them over at the close of the Exhibition and to send them in charge of competent lecturers in continuous exhibition throughout the kingdom. The expense would be small—i.e., the cost of carriage, the salary of lecturers and operators, and sometimes the hire of a hall. It may be hoped that the local Chambers of Commerce would see that the exhibition was advertised among the commercial and general community and that arrangements would be made for the attendance of schools. I know that films are already exhibited through the agency of some of the High Commissioners' offices, but this scheme would be something more comprehensive, something not only to instruct but to arrest attention and strike the imagination by the infinite variety of its subjects.

Again, as the scheme develops, it may be that arrangements could be made for sending films and lecturers through the Empire. Not only would these

lecturers through the Empire. Not only would those overseas learn of our industries at home, of our shipyards, our mines and foundries, of our mills and manufactures, but Canada would learn of West Africa, Fiji would learn of Canada, and so on throughout the gamut of our Empire life.

Knowledge of each other is our primary need, and no longer are we altogether dependent on travel for this knowledge. Those who would make their homes overseas can see them, so to speak, in advance, and those whom they leave behind can follow their lives and feel that they have not altogether passed beyond their ken. But above all remains the benefit of educating the young and of strengthening the ties of sentiment, which mainly rests upon our knowledge of each other.

Yours, &c.,

**EDWARD DAVSON.**