



## FILM SEMINAR

**WELCOME SPEECH BY THE CHIEF JUSTICE  
P. V. RAJMANNA, CHAIRMAN, SANGEET  
NATAK AKADEMI**

**M**R. Prime Minister and friends : On behalf of the Sangeet Natak Akademi, I thank you, Sir, most sincerely for consenting to inaugurate this Film Seminar. I am not repeating a platitudinous formula when I say that it was very gracious on your part to have spared the time for this function amidst your multifarious engagements and pressure of work. From Formosa to Film Seminar is certainly a far cry and you only could devote time to both.

I welcome you, Sir, as the Director of one of the greatest films in history—the film of New India's destiny. Politicians and statesmen, capitalists and workmen, scientists and technicians, artists and poets, and millions of common men and women are participating in this great film of which you are the supreme director.

I welcome you, Sir, not only as the Prime Minister of India, but also in another capacity as the Chairman of a sister academy, the Sahitya Akademi.

At a meeting held on 25th March, 1954, the Sangeet Natak Akademi resolved to arrange for a seminar on the future of Indian films.

Two directors were nominated for the purpose, Srimati Devika Rani Roerich and Shri Prithviraj Kapur. On several grounds, financial and others, the number of members was limited to 40 ; to be chosen by the directors. Sri B.N. Sircar was requested to act as the Chairman of the Seminar, and several leading personalities in the film world were requested to partake in the deliberations of the Seminar. Unfortunately, there has been a misunderstanding as to the object and scope of the Seminar. This is not surprising as we appear to be living in an age of misunderstanding in national and international affairs.

This Seminar was not intended to be a congress or conference of representatives of the different organisations connected with the production and distribution of films. The Seminar was not expected to arrive at decisions or to pass resolutions which *proprio vigore* would be binding on all concerned. The object of the Seminar was to provide a common platform for the discussion of several aspects of film production and distribution by some of the leading persons of the film world. It will be an insult to the motion picture industry if we thought that there were only 40 persons in the industry who were worthy to take part in this

Seminar. The directors are acutely conscious of the fact that several people who well deserve to be included have not been included. But this was inevitable. I can however say without hesitation that those who have been included are some of the top-ranking personalities in different departments of the industry. As the Seminar is being sponsored by the Sangeet Natak Akadami, the emphasis will be on the aesthetic aspect of the films. But the other aspects such as the technical, the social and the economic aspects have not been neglected.

Here, we have, Sir, for the first time in the history of Indian motion pictures, gathered together on a common platform, distinguished producers, directors, technical experts, artists, script writers, lyric writers, music directors, dance directors, distributors and exhibitors. They will be able to meet and discuss matters of common interest ; they will be able to exchange ideas ; and they will be able to plan for the future. I can assure you, Sir, that the papers which will be read at the Seminar are of a very high level, and I am sure, the discussion on these papers will be of the same high level. I have no doubt that the report of the proceedings of the Seminar, when finally published, will be of first rate importance. Though the Indian film industry is nearly 40 years old, this is the first time in its history that a Seminar, like this is being held. The success of this Seminar will, I hope, lead to the holding of similar Seminars in the future.

It is a matter of common knowledge that the film industry in India is a major industry. In respect of capital investment, we are told it comes second, and in respect of people employed it comes fifth. There are over 70 studios for the production of motion pictures. The film industry provides entertainment for the millions and its importance in a welfare State is self-evident.

Every invention of men designed for his use and advancement is also capable of abuse. Take the instance of language, one of the greatest inventions of man. It is impossible to exaggerate the utility of this invention which helps us to communicate our thoughts to others, to spread knowledge and inculcate moral and spiritual ideals. But language can also be used to

abuse others, to disseminate hatred and violence and to pervert morals. On this ground, it is idle to decry language as such. Likewise, with the films. I do not deny that some of the films contain matter which is likely to have an unhealthy influence on immature minds. But that can be no ground for denouncing the films altogether.

As I am never tired of saying, though the production of a film has many of the elements of an industrial undertaking, the film when made and released is and should be treated as a work of art. The film, therefore, should also be judged by standards which we employ to judge any other work of art. The film is boundless in its scope and endless in its possibilities and undoubtedly it is the most important art form today. The film is a new art form which is in a continuous state of development. Its appeal is direct and universal. Therein lies its strength. It is for this reason a great force which can be utilised for several things besides entertainment.

I see a great future, a glorious future, for Indian films. Before long, I expect Indian films to be exhibited to crowded houses all over the world and they will earn not only money for our country, but also reputation for beauty, goodness and truth. India must make its distinctive contribution to the film art of the world and I am confident it will. If this Seminar would help even a little towards that end, it would not have been held in vain.

On this occasion, I shall be failing in my duty if I do not acknowledge and proclaim the magnificent and enormous work done by Shrimati Devaki Rani Roerich for this Seminar.

For months, she had devoted all her time and energy to make the Seminar a success. Of course, she had the assistance of several friends, but I wonder if anyone else would have secured the spontaneous and willing cooperation of so many leading persons in all walks of life. She has amply earned the gratitude of the Sangeet Natak Akadami and the entire film world.

Once more, thanking you, Sir, for your kindness in accepting our invitation, I request you to inaugurate this Film Seminar.