

CHINE

R E P O R T
of the Chinese Delegation
Dubrovnik, 1956

Mr. Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Friends,

I have the honour and pleasure of attending this Congress in the capacity of observer from China. I hope to learn from this Congress useful knowledge and experience that will facilitate the work of setting up a China Film Archives. I beg to state with a deep sense of gratitude the fact that since the last Annual Congress of the International Federation of Film Archives, the Preparatory Committee on a China Film Archives has received considerable warm support from the Federation and from friends concerned. This support has helped greatly to consolidate the cordial and friendly relations subsisting between the film workers in China and those in the other countries. Cooperation and exchange of films and relevant materials has since had a plain sailing!

China's film industry is on the eve of an immense expansion. Large numbers of used films and relevant materials, hitherto discarded, scattered about, or not properly kept, require urgent efforts at unified preservation, study, examination and concentration. It was with this aim in view that in February, this year, the Preparatory Committee on China Film Archives was founded.

The major part of the work of the Preparatory Committee has been to recover old films both Chinese and foreign and to make an inventory of them. In the past, some work had already been done along this line, now it is a more determined effort to make a clearance, and the result, though initial, is encouraging enough. We dare say we have thus gathered a pretty clear idea about the used foreign films preserved in and scattered about the country in fairly large numbers. We have listed them up according to their natures and countries of origin. The Government sets a high premium upon this aspect of cultural assets. The Film Bureau of the Ministry of Culture has spared no efforts in building film repositories, in equipping and manning them, in repairing and

duplicating some outstanding films. The Ministry has also decided to advance the completion of the building of a repository which is to surpass the existing ones in up-to-date technical equipment and in holding capacity, and which is to be the main repository under the auspices of the China Film Archives to come into being and to be the home of all films, old and new, Chinese and foreign.

The work of checking and listing the old films done, we are proceeding to index them. Much of the literature relating to them has been lost through the long years of war and this hampers our indexing work and reduces our efficiency. To overcome this difficulty, we are organizing up experienced scenario-writers, playwrights, film directors, film-cutters, distributors, etc., who will supply us with what they can remember or recover or revive of used, old, discarded, or lost films. As a matter of fact, some of them have already made available to us certain invaluable references and materials which had not been known to us before. Furthermore, we are establishing contact with certain universities, schools, libraries, publishing houses in the hope that they, will in due time come out with preserved films and decide to contribute them to the Preparatory Committee. Help from the above sources, we hope, will facilitate our indexing work.

With reference to the collecting of films, all the film studios in the country, according to instructions from the Film Bureau of the Ministry of Culture, provide the Preparatory Committee from time to time a complete set of materials wanted (including the various kinds of negatives of films they have made, controlling prints and all relevant materials). The China Film Distribution Corporation also sends us sufficient materials relative to the films they have imported so as to enable us to make selective purchases. Besides, there are films we received as gift films from abroad. Our search for Chinese and foreign used films will be continued over a comparatively long period. Since the establishment of the People's Republic of China, a large number of old films have been collected from old-time film-producers and distributors. Of course, we do not propose to rest on our oars, we will continue to dredge up and salvage old films, so to speak.

According to the result of the collection made in the same area, our collection of old films consists of as many as 177 full-length and short films including imported films, comprising 1147 reels. The Government is not only paying for the films collected, but in case of a film of a particularly high value, is also giving a special form of reward in addition to the price paid. Naturally, those who are in possession of old films are quite willing to part with them.

All this can only be a beginning, and we are formulating a work plan on a larger scale for the years ahead. The China Film Archives we are to set up will do its work through four main departments:

- 1) For study and examination of films through two subdivisions, one for Chinese films and the other for foreign films; the Chinese division will also take up the study of the development of the Chinese film industry.

- 2) Conservation and safe-keeping of films in film repositories.

- 3) Work relating to the checking, repairing and duplicating of films.

- 4) Work preparatory to setting up projection rooms for show and review of films.

Every department of work is to be sufficiently and technically manned, and for this purpose, the Film Bureau of the Ministry of Culture has enlisted the service of a number of men of technical abilities from among the film workers over the country, and will, through the Peking Institute of Cinematography, train a number of college graduates as experts along these lines. With the support of the Government, a China Film Archives will soon come into being and will be in a fair way to construct and develop. We are full of confidence to push right ahead and to attain a degree of success that the cause deserves.

On behalf of the Preparatory Committee of the China Film Archives, I wish to say once more that during the year past we have received from the International Federation of Film Archives and from friends concerned a great deal of warm support and help which goes a long way toward facilitating our work preparatory to the establishment of a China Film Archives, and that for this support

and help we are deeply grateful! We wish we could do something to serve the Federation and to our friends concerned in return for what they have done for us. It is my firm belief that through the channels of such a Congress as this a free and liberal exchange of rich and beneficial experiences will always be possible, and that hereafter contact and cooperation between you and us will be more frequent than ever. I wish this Congress great success!

I wish the International Federation of Film Archives and its member Film Archives in the various countries represented at this Congress great success!