Hays Announces the Aim is to Reflect Better Standards—Ban Ridicule of Law.

NEW DRINKING SCENE RULE

Crime Details Are Ruled Out and Respect for Flag Demanded in Movies.

A new code of ethical practices for motion picture producers was adopted by the Motion Picture Producers and Distributers Association at a meeting of the board of directors of that organization yesterday at their offices, 469 Fifth Avenue.

The ratification of a new set of rules was considered necessary by the members of the organization headed by Will Hays because of the changes brought about in pictures by the addition of sound, which allows more literal translation of plays and literary works, call for the use of more liberal subject matter.

The three main points of the agreement provide that:

1. Every effort shall be made to reflect in drama and entertainment the better standards of life.
2. Law, natural or human, shall not be ridiculed.
3. Sympathy shall not be created for the violation of the law.

Oppose Crime Details. More specifically the code provides:

That crimes against law shall never be presented in such a way as to throw sympathy with the crime as against law and justice.

That acts of murder or brutality shall be presented only in such a way as will not inspire imitation.

That methods of crime shall not be presented in explicit detail on the screen.

That revenge in modern times shall not be justified as a motive.

That the use of liquor in American life shall be restricted to the actual requirements of characterization or plot.

"The love of man and woman." Will Hays explained yesterday, "and the social problems that emphasize the need of religious, ethical and moral teachings, are obviously proper plot material for motion picture presentation. Nevertheless, the screen, which reflects the art of the multitude, with its vast public appeal, owes a definite responsibility to public morals to treat all sex relationships with due care and judgment.

The code provides therefore:

That the sanctity of the institution of marriage and the home shall be upheld.

That adultery shall not be explicitly treated or justified.

That scenes of passion shall not

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be introduced when not essential to the plot.

Sex perversion or any inference of it is forbidden on the screen. The subject of white slavery shall not be treated on the screen.

Good taste and a proper regard for the sensibilities of the audience must regulate the treatment of low, unpleasant, although not necessarily evil subjects. Among other provisions for safeguarding the standards of motion pictures are the following:

No film or episode may throw ridicule on any religious faith.

Ministers of religion in their character of ministers of religion should not be used as comic characters or as villains.

The use of the flag shall be consistently respectful.

The history, institutions, prominent people and citizenry of other nations shall be represented fairly. Pointed profanity is forbidden.

Obscenity in word, gesture, reference, song, joke or by suggestion, is forbidden.

Indecent or undue exposure is forbidden.

Dances which emphasize indecent movements are to be regarded as obscene.

"Such subjects as hangings or electrocutions, third-degree methods, brutality, apparent cruelty to children or animals, must be treated, the code provides, within the careful limits of good taste."

The new code is prefaced by a resolution which provides for uniform interpretation of its provisions. "Every step of this procedure," Mr. Hays explained, "is an act of self-government and voluntary self-discipline within the industry."

"Sound and quality of presentations," he said, "have increased the motion picture audience of the United States by 15,000,000 weekly. This is a great challenge. The industry can leave nothing undone to express its sense of responsibility to the public."

The new code is generally considered an outgrowth of severe criticism by prominent churchmen, who charge that the moral character of audiences is being undermined by the sort of action they see on the screen. Outstanding among these critics have been the Rev. Guy Emery Shipler, editor of The Churchman, and Canon William Sheafe Chase.

Other critics have declared that film producers are not keeping up with theatrical producers in enterprise and liberal treatment of realistic situations.