

# “DOING EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO ENCOURAGE A BRITISH SENTIMENT”:

## *The Rise of Film Censorship and Regulation of Picture Houses in British Columbia, 1910–15*

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**I**F WE COULD TIME-TRAVEL back to Vancouver in the early 1910s and walk along East Hastings and Granville Streets, we would be faced with an enormous number of cheap entertainments, including shooting galleries, pool halls, vaudeville theatres, and what were then termed picture houses. The latter came in all shapes and sizes, reflecting a business activity that was in a state of unpredictable growth. The police concentrated on public safety and order on these streets; however, film screenings posed a peculiar challenge to their remit. Whereas actors and performers in live theatre and vaudeville could be held responsible for their words and actions, the same could not be said for film exhibition. Municipal and provincial governments throughout Canada began in this period, somewhat unevenly, under various social pressures to address the developing movie business in their midst. This article traces how British Columbia’s film censorship regime came to be and explains what kinds of regulation were initially deemed necessary by 1914, the first full year of governmental oversight of films released for viewing in the province. By analyzing this cultural activity, and its regulation, I argue that we gain a richer understanding of the political and social attitudes of those (primarily white and of British extraction) who ran the province.

This research on censorship of films and regulation of picture houses complements established and recent work on the provincial and national governments’ attitudes and enacted legislation with regard to Aboriginal and Asian populations in British Columbia before 1915. It reaffirms that a solid connection between the Dominion of Canada and the British Empire was uppermost in the minds of lawmakers and

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administrators. As Kay Anderson has observed of this period in British Columbia, “white skin colour, English language, and Protestant cultural traditions” determined the privileged group from whose vantage point policies emanated.<sup>1</sup> Peter Ward has drawn attention to the impact of the Conservative federal government of Canada led by Robert Borden, who “appeared sympathetic to white British Columbia’s demands for exclusion.”<sup>2</sup>

More recently, Renisa Mawani has highlighted the “racial asymmetries of Empire” that were influential in British Columbia, allowing for different definitions of British subjects to be used to discriminate against Punjabis and Aboriginal people.<sup>3</sup> Mawani also points out the tension between capitalist activity with its preference for low-wage immigrant workers and the provincial government’s reluctance to displace a costlier white working-class populace who could exert political pressure.<sup>4</sup> This racialization of policies and their interpretation is found within the rise of film censorship in the province.

One may also argue that the dealings with cinema were a way for mainly British settlers to ensure, as Laura Ishiguro has argued with reference to their correspondence, “British Columbia as a conceivable and comfortable home.”<sup>5</sup> According to birth country census statistics for 1911, Vancouver’s then population of 100,000 people comprised 43 percent Canadian, 30 percent British, 10 percent American, 3.3 percent Chinese, and approximately 2 percent each for Italian, Japanese, and Scandinavian. Russian, East Indian, and Greek immigrants were all below 1 percent. Aboriginal people counted by the census amounted only to 117 persons, or 0.002 percent, and were thus totally absent from civic discourse. It is likely many of the identified Canadian born came from British extraction. Only the Canadian and US cohorts were relatively equal between the sexes. The British contingent were 60 percent male,

<sup>1</sup> Kay J. Anderson, *Vancouver’s Chinatown: Racial Discourse in Canada, 1875–1980* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1991), 16.

<sup>2</sup> W. Peter Ward, *White Canada Forever: Popular Attitudes and Public Policy toward Orientals in British Columbia* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1978), 93.

<sup>3</sup> Renisa Mawani, *Across Oceans of Law: The Komagata Maru and Jurisdiction in the Time of Empire* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2018), 30.

<sup>4</sup> See Renisa Mawani, *Colonial Proximities: Crossracial Encounters and Juridical Truths in British Columbia, 1871–1921* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2009).

<sup>5</sup> Laura Ishiguro, *Nothing to Write Home About: British Family Correspondence and the Settler Colonial Everyday in British Columbia* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2019), 214. One might also see this intended “social” upgrade of Vancouver in 1911 when the provincial government gave saloons three years to transform into hotels if they wanted to continue to sell liquor. See Robert A. Campbell, *Sit Down and Drink Your Beer* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001), 17.

though this was overshadowed by the 66 to 97 percent male population of the other ethnicities. Religious affiliation supports this pervasive Britishness, with 26 percent each for Anglican and Presbyterian, 14 percent for Methodist, 10 percent for Roman Catholic, and 6 percent for Baptist in 1911.<sup>6</sup> Anxieties over the imbalance of the sexes, specifically in the downtown core where much coarse male behaviour was in full view, played a role in gaining community consensus with regard to censorship and amusement business oversight.

Canadian governments were flagged that film censorship would emerge as an issue when the United Kingdom passed legislation in 1909, allowing local authorities to license movie theatres and to prevent Sunday openings. Also beginning in 1909, the Moving Picture Exhibitors Association in the United States formed a censorship committee to review all films presented in New York, then the centre of film production in North America. The committee was staffed by volunteers and became the National Board of Censorship of Motion Pictures. This New York organization was not greeted with universal acceptance in other parts of the country, and individual states accelerated moves to introduce their own censorship boards.

Provincial governments in Canada were much less orderly in their approach. Canadian film production was small, and the main task was to monitor imported material from the United States and Europe. In essence, one country was involuntarily placed in a position to pass judgment on the attitudes and manifestations of other countries. In 1911, Manitoba, Ontario, and Quebec passed laws to institute film censorship and regulation within their jurisdictions; New Brunswick proceeded in 1912, followed by British Columbia, Alberta, and Saskatchewan in 1913; Nova Scotia waited until 1915. The burst of government oversight between 1911 and 1915 in Canada can be explained by the rapid development of custom-built cinemas and the conversion of vaudeville houses into cinemas, in addition to the periodic use of films in vaudeville houses and mainstream “legitimate” theatres. Drawing upon contemporary newspapers, photographs, and archived government records, it can be asserted that BC’s film culture and censorship practices in the 1910s were heavily influenced by the concerns and anxieties of white Britishness.

Comparison with Toronto is instructive, as although it had four times the population of Vancouver, its religious affiliation breakdown was similar, with English Anglicans and Scottish and Irish Presbyterians

<sup>6</sup> See the tables in Robert A.J. McDonald, *Making Vancouver: Class, Status, and Social Boundaries, 1863–1913* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1996), 143 and 211.

dominant. What was markedly different from Vancouver was that the police in Toronto took on a leading role in enforcing compliance with acceptable norms in theatres – a role that stretched beyond fire safety concerns. Places of business needed a licence secured from the Board of Police Commissioners in order to operate. Up until 1910, police in Toronto seized and trashed films they deemed immoral. There were even a few cases of proprietors' being fined for what were deemed illegal exhibitions.<sup>7</sup> The size of the task, along with confusion over whether the Ontario Provincial Police or the city police were responsible for censorship, led to calls for a central provincial censorship body. Ontario and British Columbia had much less dissent towards censorship than did Quebec, although this may be explained by the dominance of the Roman Catholic Church in Quebec and its negative attitude towards cinema entertainment. Indeed, one leading critic argued that early cinema in Quebec created an alternate working-class public sphere, whereas the Roman Catholic Church "saw the cinema as an attack on the lifestyle and history of Quebec."<sup>8</sup> On occasion, this debate over Quebec values could frame cinema enjoyment as susceptible to base and immoral human temptations.

Despite the recession of the previous year, 1914 happens to be the high point of film exhibition in the second decade of the twentieth century in British Columbia and certainly in Vancouver, the province's largest city, which comprised at this time 25 percent of the province's total population. Nineteen fourteen also coincides with the first full year of official censorship records and attendant government correspondence from which we can characterize social attitudes about the cinema and its economic model. Maps of cinema locations in Vancouver between 1906 and 1930 have been created as part of this research and may be found in the University of British Columbia's digital repository.<sup>9</sup> Based on street directories over the years in question, the Vancouver maps confirm the numerical ascendancy of cinemas and theatrical spaces in 1914 (thirty-nine in all in the city) compared to previous and subsequent years. Cinemas, vaudeville houses, and theatres appeared mainly along two downtown streets, Hastings and Granville, close to the major business district and serviced by nearby public transport. Two hundred kilometres of

<sup>7</sup> See Paul S. Moore, *Now Playing: Early Moviegoing and the Regulation of Fun* (New York: SUNY, 2008), 131.

<sup>8</sup> Scott MacKenzie, "A Screen of One's Own: Early Cinema in Quebec and the Public Sphere, 1906–1928," *Screen* 41, no. 2 (2000): 195.

<sup>9</sup> See Brian McIlroy, Emma Myers, and Sonya William, *Screens in Vancouver: Cinemagoing and the City in 1914* at <https://open.library.ubc.ca/cIRcle/collections/facultyresearchandpublications/52383/items/1.0167731>.



Figure 1. Crowds (mostly male) on East Hastings Street, ca. 1914. *Source:* City of Vancouver Archives, ref code: AM 1376-CVA 1376-99 [A72268.TIF].

electric railway track connected Vancouver with up to fifty thousand more residents and potential cinema-goers in the municipalities of South Vancouver, Point Grey, Burnaby, and Richmond. In raw numbers, we know that, in 1914, 120 theatre licences were awarded to exhibit films throughout British Columbia, and at least one-third of these related to Vancouver. Put another way, fifteen thousand of the forty-four thousand licensed seats in the province were to be found in its largest city.<sup>10</sup> The fact that over seven days all Vancouver citizens could be accommodated inside a picture house speaks to the general popularity of the movies and is strikingly similar to what was found in other cities nearby, such as Portland, Oregon.<sup>11</sup>

Just over a hundred years ago, Vancouver was a rapidly developing but unequal city. The active discrimination against Asian people from China, India, and Japan skewed immigration profiles towards the

<sup>10</sup> C.L. Gordon to Attorney General W.J. Bowser, 3 October 1914, p. 2, British Columbia Archives (hereafter BCA), GR 1323 B02099-10254-15D-14.

<sup>11</sup> William Trufant Foster, president of Reed College, was tasked in 1914 to investigate the places of amusement in Portland. He hired sixty investigators to visit all theatres and concluded that picture houses, both in terms of films exhibited and customer conduct, were generally decent. See his report, *Vaudeville and Motion Picture Shows: A Study of Theaters in Portland, Oregon* (Portland: Social Services Series 2, 1914).

male gender.<sup>12</sup> There was a prohibitive \$500 head tax on immigrants from China, an agreement with Japan that severely limited Japanese immigrants to Canada, and a law that immigrants by sea must complete their voyage without stopping, which effectively barred South Asians. But even if this had not been the case, the role of Vancouver as a terminus for construction workers, railway workers, sailors, forestry workers, and fishers meant that waves of young and middle-aged men passed through Vancouver looking for work and for ways to relax between jobs. These men were captive audiences for cheap entertainment since many of the rooming houses and hotels servicing them lay along Hastings Street. Directories and fire insurance maps of the period indicate that the theatres rubbed shoulders with shooting galleries, pool halls, bars, barbershops, and small general retail outlets. The red-light district was also nearby. If one were to be on any of these main downtown arteries, one would be confronted with groups of men. Historian Jean Barman quotes the observations of writer Bertrand Sinclair, who describes downtown Vancouver as “a region of semitic clothing stores, cheap hotels, employment agencies where the woodsmen flocked in hundreds, gathered in groups along the sidewalk, [and] rioted in bars.”<sup>13</sup> Unsurprisingly perhaps, the chief constable’s reports of city crime for the 1910s placed male drunkenness, drunken and disorderly behaviour, and vagrancy at the top of police concerns. Naturally, the middle-class voting citizens of Vancouver (one had to be male, own property, and have resided in the city for six months to be eligible to vote for mayor and aldermen) were sensitive to the perception of the growing city as a rough, unsophisticated, even crude location.<sup>14</sup> This background helps to explain the social reform fervour to be found in the city’s newspapers and the desire to protect women, and especially children, from perceived atavistic forces. The phenomenon of cinema-going became part of this struggle for respectability and social control.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Part of this inequity is that the city administration gave little thought to the Squamish, Musqueam, and Tseil-Watuth peoples whose territory both British and Asian immigrants came to occupy.

<sup>13</sup> Jean Barman, *The West beyond The West: A History of British Columbia*, 3rd ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007), 198. Barman quotes from Bertrand Sinclair’s historical fiction *The Inverted Pyramid* (Toronto: Fredrick Goodchild, 1924), which centres on BC’s timber industry.

<sup>14</sup> Vancouver had its own city charter, which allowed it to open municipal voting to widows and single women who owned property; however, women were denied the provincial vote until 1917 and the federal vote until 1920. The limitation of the franchise meant that L.D. Taylor became mayor of a city of 100,000 in 1910 with only 3,188 votes. See Daniel Francis, *Mayor Louis Taylor and the Rise of Vancouver* (Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press, 2004), 210.

<sup>15</sup> Even into the 1980s film censorship in Canada was a constant topic of cultural discussion. See Malcolm Dean, *Censored! Only in Canada: The History of Film Censorship – The Scandal*

IMPORTED AND LOCAL ANXIETIES:  
THE ORIGIN OF BC FILM CENSORSHIP

One of the first indications that censorship in Vancouver was an issue occurred in January 1910 when Reverend Dr. Perry and Reverend J.P. Westman met the mayor of Vancouver, Louis Taylor, to argue for a morality officer.<sup>16</sup> This person, they thought, would be employed to monitor not just theatrical shows inside auditoria but also the billboards and posters outside. The mayor politely thanked them and promptly shifted the responsibility for looking at this idea to a new police commission he had set up. By taking this administrative route, the mayor was probably stalling, though he may have hoped that such matters could be solved by recourse to legal statute. However, pressure from various quarters kept the topic in the lap of the municipal government. In February 1910, the Juvenile Protection Association met in Vancouver when the provincial legislature was debating a new juvenile courts act. Just as important as the problem of cigarettes being supplied to children were the “demoralizing effects of the cheap theatres.”<sup>17</sup> The word “cheap” clearly referred to the fact that, for five cents, a child could attend the moving pictures, but it also implied vulgarity since this was the era in which live performance was generally viewed as “legitimate theatre.”<sup>18</sup> The president of the Juvenile Protection Association, Frederick Wade, believed that the new legislation would allow the police to bring before the courts any proprietor showing material “objectionable or corrupting to the minds of children.”<sup>19</sup> The association went further and adopted a motion that city council hire officials to preview all moving pictures. Unlike Toronto’s police, Vancouver’s police did not seem to be unduly exercised by the movie business.

Three months later, in May 1910, the finance committee of the Vancouver City Council met to approve raises in licence fees for various kinds of establishments. What is revealed here is that there was a separate licensing commission, and its commissioner, James Findlay, reported to the finance committee that fees should be raised for hotels, liquor shops, and cheap theatres.<sup>20</sup> Comparisons with Montreal were made, where

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*Off the Screen* (Toronto: Virgo Press, 1981). Stanley Fox provides an entertaining overview of censorship in British Columbia from 1913 to 1963 in “Censored! Unsuitable for British Columbians,” *British Columbia History* 40, no. 1 (2007): 7–12.

<sup>16</sup> “Censorship of Theatres,” *Daily Province*, 31 July 1910.

<sup>17</sup> “To Provide Funds for Juvenile Court,” *Daily Province*, 16 February 1910.

<sup>18</sup> This distinction is not ironclad as the municipalities had to give licences to other live performance events, such as visiting circuses.

<sup>19</sup> “To Provide Funds for Juvenile Court.”

<sup>20</sup> “Fees for All Liquor Licenses to Be Advanced,” *Daily Province*, 20 May 1910.

cheap theatre licences were soon to cost \$500 compared to Vancouver's \$100, and the committee decided to follow the former's lead. However, if the theatre had slot machines, the licence was raised to \$750, indicating disapproval of gambling (the hope being that this yearly rate would prevent its proliferation). Legitimate theatres came off best, as it was decided that their yearly rate would remain at \$250, whereas vaudeville theatres now had to pay \$500. In a reflective mood, aldermen on the committee asked the city solicitor to prepare a bylaw that would classify theatres along the lines the fees implied.

In June 1910, a further move towards formal censorship in Vancouver was quietly announced when Chas. Jones of the treasurer's office was promoted and appointed as Vancouver's trades licence inspector.<sup>21</sup> Though it was no doubt assumed that he would approve or deny building licences based on suitability and safety, the more general idea of *desirability* led to political discussion at the Finance Committee and city council. Indeed, it did not take long for municipal government officials to be pressed to decide what was and was not desirable. In July 1910, film footage of the James Jeffries–Jack Johnson fight was to be exhibited throughout North America and beyond. The *Daily Province* reported on many US cities, such as Boston, Fort Worth, and Norfolk, that intended to ban the film for fear of inciting race riots.<sup>22</sup> Black boxer Jack Johnson famously won the bout. At a fundamental level, the belief that a black person (blacks being defined in many US state laws as inferior to whites) proved to be a superior boxer to a white person provoked an enormous outcry. The debate north of the border in British Columbia was more diffuse. Few blacks lived in Vancouver, and so the railing against the black boxer was likely the manifestation of a fear of white weakness in relation to Aboriginal, Chinese, East Indian, and/or Japanese residents.<sup>23</sup> Greeks, Italians, and Russians were viewed less favourably than were the Scandinavians, who, in turn, came behind Americans. There had been serious anti-Asian riots in Vancouver in 1907, during which the Japanese community had heroically withstood violent provocation. Mayor John Lee of the nearby city of New Westminster added pressure by stating he would not ban the film of the boxing match and, in fact, wanted to

<sup>21</sup> "Purchase Juvenile Detention Home," *Daily Province*, 4 June 1910.

<sup>22</sup> "Fight Pictures to Be Placed under the Ban," *Daily Province*, 6 July 1910.

<sup>23</sup> In addition to the anti-Asian riots in 1907, the BC government refused to allow the *Komagata Maru*, with its mostly Sikh passengers, to dock in Vancouver in the summer of 1914. Newspapers of the time mischaracterized these people as illegal "Hindoos." In spite of coming from India, which belonged to the British Empire, they were deemed highly undesirable. After some time trapped on board in port, they had to return to India. In the mob chaos of their return, some of them were killed upon disembarking in India.



watch it himself.<sup>24</sup> By contrast, Dr. Daniel Spencer, superintendent of the Local Option and Moral Reform League, wrote to many mayors as well as to the province's attorney general to prevent the showing of the film due to its "degrading influence and the possibility of results which would be very objectionable."<sup>25</sup> Spencer is alluding to two different topics here. The first is clear: an objection to glorified presentations of brutality and pugilism. The second is more coded, with "possible results" most likely referring to the incitement of race riots, to the fear that white anger might be turned against the non-white population in a rerun of the 1907 street disturbances. Since cinemas in British Columbia were never segregated by race as they were in, say, North Carolina, it was thought quite possible that violence might erupt within them.<sup>26</sup>

Mayor Taylor received legal advice that he could not use the criminal code to ban the pictures, although he could use it to prohibit children from the screenings.<sup>27</sup> Dr. Spencer's criticisms of the mayor and city council were joined by Reverend Merton Smith, who gave a talk at Knox Congregational Church on Sunday, 10 July 1910, berating Vancouver as a centre for white slavery and then going on to mention the shame of exhibiting fight films.<sup>28</sup> Smith and Spencer were echoed by Reverend Lashley Hall, pastor of the Mount Pleasant Methodist Church, in opposing the showing of the Jeffries-Johnson fight for specific race-related reasons. He is quoted as saying: "it is very easy to arouse race feeling, but very difficult to allay it."<sup>29</sup> Letters to the *Daily Province* in support of Dr. Spencer and the pastors were published, although so were opinions from citizens who supported the mayor's stance. One such letter, by a J.R. Muir, is notable as he pointed out the obvious, which was that the event was popular among men and that, as far as the race

<sup>24</sup> "Will Not Stop Fight Pictures," *Daily Province*, 7 July 1910.

<sup>25</sup> "To Ban Fight Pictures," *Daily Province*, 7 July 1910.

<sup>26</sup> Racial segregation within cinemas undoubtedly occurred. It is likely this was a more common practice outside of Vancouver, though our evidence is for a period later than that under consideration in this article. For example, in the 1940s and 1950s, the Capitol Cinema in Prince Rupert allocated one side of the cinema hall to Aboriginals. See Kamala Elizabeth Nayar, *The Punjabis in British Columbia: Location, Labour, First Nations and Multiculturalism* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2012), 189. More commonly, cinemas with a balcony allocated that space to non-whites, as in the famous case of Viola Desmond in Nova Scotia, whose picture now features on the Canadian ten-dollar bill. One Coast Salish Elder, Elsie Paul, remembers walking with her family four miles to a cinema only to find the balcony full, and, though there were available seats in the main hall, they were not allowed to take them. See Elsie Paul with Paige Raibmon and Harmony Johnson, *Written as I Remember It* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2014), 257.

<sup>27</sup> "Solicitor Doubts Power of Council," *Daily Province*, 8 July 1910.

<sup>28</sup> "Pastor Condemns Many Things in the City," *Daily Province*, 11 July 1910.

<sup>29</sup> "Preacher Criticizes Mayor's Attitude," *Daily Province*, 11 July 1910.



Figure 2. Maple Leaf Theatre and Globe Theatre on Granville, ca. 1913. Source: Vancouver Public Library, acc. no. 8394 [VPL.8394.TIF]

issue was concerned, surely the fact of the low “coloured” population in Vancouver was pertinent. More tellingly, Muir cited another fight film (the Jack Johnson–Stanley Ketchel bout) that screened at the Vancouver Opera House a few months earlier and that had occasioned no protest.<sup>30</sup> Muir called Dr. Spencer a “moral dictator,” which, not surprisingly, aroused the letter-writing passion of the good doctor, who sought to out Mr. Muir as the manager of the Maple Leaf, Majestic, and Rose Theatres, and therefore as someone whose permissive views were motivated by profit.<sup>31</sup> Though Spencer forced the Vancouver council to look at creating a bylaw to prohibit fight films, its solicitor reported in August 1910 that the city did not have the authority to do this.<sup>32</sup>

Dr. Spencer continued his campaign despite this setback, endeavouring to change the Municipal Clauses Act to encompass *elected* rather than appointed licence inspectors and police commissioners. He was not

<sup>30</sup> J.R. Muir, “Dr. Spencer and the Pictures,” *Daily Province*, 13 July 1910.

<sup>31</sup> Dr. Daniel Spencer, “Those Pictures Again,” *Daily Province*, 15 July 1910.

<sup>32</sup> “Can Not Prohibit Fight Pictures,” *Daily Province*, 16 August 1910.

successful in achieving his goal, but the role of Spencer is significant as he helped set the parameters of the debate that would soon follow. In letters in the newspaper he laid out various possible options with regard to censoring: "The fight pictures can be barred in several ways. The mayor can do it in Vancouver; the attorney-general can do it for the province; the customs officers can forbid their entry on the score of immoral tendency; the minister of customs can bar their entry into Canada under regulations or by an order-in-council. At least this is the way I read section 105 of the Criminal Code and section 107 of the amended code."<sup>33</sup> Spencer here encapsulates the jurisdictional struggle ahead among municipal, provincial, and national governments on this issue.

Trades licence inspector Chas. Jones found himself rejecting applications mainly because too many theatres already existed on Hastings Street as a whole, or, at least, on a specific block.<sup>34</sup> Only when Jones made a negative recommendation did it find its way to the finance committee. By all accounts, it seems that Jones simply sought to ensure that acquiring a licence was a sound business decision and that nearby residents and merchants did not disapprove it in the majority of petitions that came before council. By September 1911, this sense of responsibility for surrounding premises led the city to institute regulations for projectionists (or "operators" as they were then called) to ward off fire risk. Operators had to pass a technical exam drawn up by the city's electrical department: they had to ensure no visitors came to the booth, which also had to be a no-smoking zone.<sup>35</sup>

From city council minutes indicating the aldermen's desire for provincial action as well as from amendments to the city of Vancouver's charter (to enable the trades licence inspector to judge that both cinemas and the films exhibited within them were acceptable), it can be deduced that council was dealing with a range of requests and complaints surrounding this relatively new business. Under a 1911 amendment to the Vancouver Incorporation Act, 1900, Jones had the power to remove any billboard, poster, or exhibited film that was deemed "lewd, indecent, or immoral."<sup>36</sup> However, such a task was clearly reactive rather than preventative and was unsystematic. Defining the limits of morality was effectively placed in the hands of one man. Aldermen did look east and south, and were aware that Ontario and Pennsylvania had already passed censorship legislation. Thus a groundswell of opinion from church leaders

<sup>33</sup> "Rev. Dr. Spencer Has Replied to the Mayor," *Daily Province*, 9 July 1910.

<sup>34</sup> See "Theater License Is Not Favored," *Daily Province*, 29 November 1910.

<sup>35</sup> See "Protect Public in Moving Picture Theaters," *Daily Province*, 6 September 1911.

<sup>36</sup> See *British Columbia Gazette*, 16 November 1911, 16279.

and from conservative bodies, not to mention pleas from municipalities like Vancouver, found a Conservative provincial government finally willing to act and to pass censorship legislation in 1913.

#### BRITISH COLUMBIA'S PROVINCIAL CENSORSHIP OFFICE

The first appointed BC censor was Charles L. Gordon, who had worked for the *Province* daily newspaper. It may have been the thinking that someone involved in the reporting of the issues of the day would have a good sense of evolving public morality. Gordon may have been sympathetic to the provincial Conservative Party, then in power, but it is more likely that his selection from the unaligned *Province* newspaper afforded political cover for future unpopular decisions.<sup>37</sup> The *Vancouver News-Advertiser* and the *Vancouver World*, respectively, rooted for the Conservative Party and Vancouver mayor Louis D. Taylor (who owned the latter paper), whereas the *Vancouver Sun* generally supported the opposition Liberal Party. Another feature of the *Province* was that its readership was primarily working class, a major part of the clientele of the “cheap theatres.” Gordon, who came from an Anglican background but who was married in a Presbyterian church, had proved himself to be a safe pair of hands in representing issues of governance since he was the author of a 1911 article entitled “Government Services,” in which he tracked the growth of the post office and the burgeoning Port of Vancouver.<sup>38</sup>

After the passing of the Motion Pictures Act, 1913, Gordon was appointed on 1 April of the same year and proceeded to set up an office and screening room with a film projection machine and, unusually for the time, hired a female operator, May Watkis. She had to persuade a male projectionist at a local theatre to show her how to use the equipment and then had to withstand complaints from the operators’ union, which was upset at a woman’s receiving this civil service job.<sup>39</sup> Over the next few months, Gordon was allowed to hire two male assistant censors, James Smith (who became chief censor in 1930) and John Fleet. A third

<sup>37</sup> The *Daily Province* newspaper had been set up by anti-Conservative Hewitt Bostock, but by 1910 it had passed to Walter Cameron Nichol whose views seemed to fluctuate from Liberal to Conservative depending on the issue. In the 1910s, Nichol enjoyed criticizing the three-time mayor of Vancouver, Louis D. Taylor, who happened to be the owner of the rival *Vancouver World* newspaper. For further discussion of local Vancouver politics, see Daniel Francis, *Mayor Louis Taylor and the Rise of Vancouver* (Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press, 2004).

<sup>38</sup> See C.L. Gordon, “Government Services,” *British Columbia Magazine* 7, no. 6 (1911): 567–75.

<sup>39</sup> See Peter Morris, *Embattled Shadows: A History of Canadian Cinema, 1895–1939* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1978), 150.

assistant censor, William Oswald, was hired in 1914 to travel to inspect theatres throughout British Columbia. The censorship office fell within the attorney general's portfolio, so correspondence between Gordon and William John Bowser, who was then attorney general and would go on to be premier, was frequent. An early assertion of power was to reassure an exhibitor that even if trades licence inspector Chas. Jones had previously banned a fight film, if it were passed by the censor's office it could be shown throughout the province.<sup>40</sup> The censor's office responsibilities included allocating licences to operators, theatres, and film exchanges as well as reviewing all films before they were to be shown in the province. After much consideration and comparison with other jurisdictions in Ontario and California, Gordon decided to charge \$1 for approved operators, \$300 for film exchanges, \$75 for a theatre with a minimum of 300 seats (plus \$25 for each additional 150 seats), and \$1 for each reel of film reviewed. Approved reels had a stamp embossed on the film, and a paper certificate was also issued. Operators and theatre managers were to ensure both stamp and certificate were in order before screening the film. In Vancouver, there were six main film exchanges at work: three Canadian-owned (Canadian Amusement Company, Famous Players, and Consolidated Film Company) and three US-owned (General Film Company, Mutual Film Corporation, and Canadian-Universal). There were other small players, since Gordon collected a fee of \$50 for exchanges with ten or fewer titles.<sup>41</sup>

In January 1914, Gordon wrote an official report to Bowser to account for his office's activities, explaining that actual censoring had not begun until 9 May 1913. While he mentioned the time-consuming activities of inspecting all of British Columbia's theatres as well as travel to other provinces to confer with peers, Gordon mostly discussed actual censoring. Four thousand and five hundred reels were inspected in eight months: 198, or 4.4 percent of the total, were rejected. Interestingly, with regard to rejection, Gordon draws attention to the variance among the six film exchanges. Though he does not mention the exchanges by name in this letter, one had a rejection rate of 2.92 percent while two had a rate of 10.9 percent and 11.1 percent, respectively. Also, in this missive, Gordon dismisses the American National Board of Censorship of Moving Pictures of New York, pointing out that many films approved by this

<sup>40</sup> This situation is reported in C.L. Gordon to W.J. Bowser, 20 July 1913, BCA, GR 1323-B02099-6730-15D-13. Mr. Unsworth, owner of the Panama Theatre in Vancouver, had been told by the city trades licence inspector Chas. Jones that if he screened the Johnson-Flynn fight he would lose his licence.

<sup>41</sup> C.L. Gordon to W.J. Bowser, 7 August 1914, BCA, GR 1323-B02112-8354-15D-14.

organization had to be rejected by the BC office. As if to assert his superior standards, Gordon listed the reasons for rejections and excisions:

exploitation of contemporary criminals, expressions offensive to British patriotic sentiment, seduction, adultery, boys smoking cigarettes and drinking intoxicants, unnecessary and excessive depictions of United States flags, stories of harlots, expression of pro-Boer sentiment, sacrilege, insulting to religious sects and denominations, suggestive and indecent dances, cigarette smoking and drinking of intoxicants by women, scenes of gruesome nature, gambling, cruelty to animals, expression of Fenian sentiments, stories dealing with diseases of the sexes, bar-room brawling, ridiculing of social and moral reform work and workers, infidelity, illegitimacy, vulgarity, brutality, white slavery, bawdy house scenes, dive scenes, opium and cocaine dive scenes, debauchery of women, ridiculing of clergy, offensive to national sentiment of various races of people, gross indecency and exploitation of insane persons for alleged comedy purposes.<sup>42</sup>

This list is distinctive in that it reveals the pro-British attitude of the BC government. The display of US flags, and any anti-British sentiment, including pro-Boer or Fenian representation, immediately raised the ire and scissors of the censors. The other concerns – white slavery, ridiculing of the clergy, racial stereotyping, and matters of sexuality – accord with US censorship boards of the time. The British Empire was still in full flower in this period, and so it is not surprising that Irish material that might suggest a struggle for independence would be deemed unpatriotic. What is slightly more surprising from our vantage point is the focus on US flags. Arguably, the elimination of US flags from films shown in British Columbia in 1913 and 1914 served as part of a political and social engineering project to ensure a fluid albeit somewhat unstable provincial identity. The premier, Richard McBride, had worried that closer commercial cooperation with the United States in the areas of fishing and lumber would risk annexation of the province.<sup>43</sup> Within a few weeks of the beginning of censorship, one of the first complaints from a Vancouver citizen received by the attorney general concerned the appearance of the “stars and stripes” in theatres. He reassured the complainant that Gordon was attending to this matter.<sup>44</sup> More letters, however, poured in, along with some public discussion of the issue

<sup>42</sup> C.L. Gordon to Attorney General Bowser, 24 January 1914, BCA, GR 1323-B02112-1972-15D-14.

<sup>43</sup> For a full account of McBride’s lengthy premiership, including his racist views, see Patricia E. Roy, *Boundless Optimism: Richard McBride’s British Columbia* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2012).

<sup>44</sup> Attorney General Bowser to Alfred J. Bland, 5 June 1913, BCA, GR 1323 B02099-4872-15D-13.

in the newspapers. Members of the Over-Seas Club (which included Premier Richard McBride) were particularly direct. It's worth quoting at length the following letter written by J.D. Campbell from Grand Forks on 30 June 1913 to the provincial secretary of his club (who then passed it on to the attorney general) in order to capture the feelings of the time. It concerns an exhibition space in the town of Grand Forks, British Columbia:

I have just returned from attending the opening of a new picture show in the town. There were two performances – 7:30 and 9 pm, and the place, capable of holding 250 people[,] was filled to the doors at each performance ... I was under the impression that a censor had been appointed by the B.C. Government owing to the representations of the Over Seas Club in order that the influx of American films might be to some extent regulated, especially those which showed the American flag. The films shown tonight were all American, passed by the “National Association” the principal one being “The Equine Spy” [Edward Warren, 1912]. This was an engagement between troops in the American civil war, a trick horse being the principal figure. The American stars and stripes were shown in nearly every film, and while there was nothing objectionable in the films themselves, there was nothing in the whole performance except the cheering crowd to show that Canada or the British Empire occupied an inch of territory on the face of the earth. When you consider that this was an opening night, and everyone in the town was there, the circumstance reflects seriously on the absence of patriotism in the proprietor of the building and the lessees of the house, and a still more serious matter is that the absence of anything Canadian or Imperial did not seem to be remarked by the crowd. Will you kindly let me know how best this matter can be taken up and some alteration made in the character of films shown. Are we to be absolutely dependent in this Province on American films, censored in America and have we as British subjects nothing to say in the matter?

You will understand as well as I do, or better, how serious a matter this is to the members of the “Over Seas club.” What can we do about it?

In response to this letter, the attorney general reassured the Victoria president of the Over-Seas Club that matters were in the hands of C.L. Gordon: “in connection with two reels of film of the Johnson-Flynn fight which were submitted to him during the last few days he made

two excisions, both cases being the United States flag. You can inform your correspondent that we are doing everything possible to encourage a British sentiment here and keep in the background as much as possible the unnecessary display of the American flag.”<sup>45</sup>

In September 1913, the US consul general David Wilbur visited the attorney general to follow up on instructions from the US secretary of state. Bowser confided to Gordon that he believed the Universal Film Manufacturing Company of New York was behind the visits as he had received word from a federal minister in Ottawa that representations were also made in Ontario. Gordon provided a report specifically on this issue of US flags so that Bowser could respond officially to the US consul general. In the first four months of operation, the censor’s office had banned eighty-nine reels of film, twenty-four of which (30 percent) were “rejected because of the too frequent display of US flags.” Gordon explained that they did not do this with “topical weeklies” but that he knew at least one theatre owner who cut them out unilaterally to avoid upsetting his customers. He went on to comment: “The manager of another Vancouver picture house has stated to me that were it not that a certain class of people patronizing his house always applaud the appearance of the US flag on his screen the flag scenes would not be so offensive.” Gordon then offered his own cinema-going observations: “I have at times witnessed in certain houses in this city the creation of ill-feeling among spectators because of the applause following the appearance of the US flag on the screen in the Topical Weeklies. The applause is occasionally followed by hissing and altercations between people in the house.”<sup>46</sup>

Bowser’s reiteration of Gordon’s observations to Wilbur was not the end of the matter. Come 1914, a new consul general, Robert E. Mansfield took up the issue with some gusto. In his letter to Bowser, he clearly argues on behalf of the Universal Film Company of New York and Los Angeles. He references a film entitled *Captain Jenny* (Otis Turner, 1914) in which US flags were apparently cut from Salvation Army scenes. He also complained about cuts to a Famous Players film entitled *The Day of Days* (Daniel Frohman, 1914). By way of pointing out the oddity of the practice, Mansfield related his own viewing experience: “On Wednesday evening March 18, I visited the Province Theatre in Vancouver, where a film entitled ‘The French Spy’ [Lawrence Trimble, 1912] manufactured

<sup>45</sup> The letter from Campbell and the attorney general’s response to the president of the Over-Seas Club can be found attached to Bowser to Blackemore, 23 July 1913, BCA, GR 1323-Bo2099-6218-15D-13.

<sup>46</sup> C.L. Gordon to W.J. Bowser, 18 September 1913, BCA, GR 1323-Bo2099-8619-15D-13.



by the French Vitagraph Company, was shown. In this film, representing scenes in Algeria and showing French troops in action, the French flag was conspicuously displayed on three occasions, and the Turkish flag in one scene. The French flag represented about 50 feet of film.<sup>47</sup> Consul General Mansfield gets his information (some of which is clearly inaccurate – he is under the illusion that nowhere else in Canada does censoring occur, and Vitagraph was a US company) from the theatre owners and US company head offices. Five days later, Gordon, who had clearly been shown the letter, provided a robust response for the use of Bowser. Gordon added a sting at the end of his letter by mentioning again that he knew one theatre manager who had taken it upon himself to excise US flags from topical weeklies, material the censor's office would not generally touch. The unnamed theatre manager apparently took this action because “the patrons of his house vigorously object to seeing the U.S. flag shown.”<sup>48</sup> The flurry of letters ends with Mr. Bowser writing a curt response to Mr. Mansfield, stating: “There is no intention of the Department being offensive at all towards your Republic but at the same time we do not see that there is anything to be gained by the unnecessary display of any flag other than our own in moving picture films.”<sup>49</sup> The chief censor in Ontario, G.E. Armstrong, had also ordered the cutting of US flags from films before being approved for exhibition, most notably in late 1911. That nearly three years later it was a sore point in British Columbia seems to suggest the issue was not only a way for a provincial body to assert its independence and power but also a way to undermine any possibility that British Columbians might identify with the United States.

The war pushed this national issue off the table, and with the United States joining the European conflict in 1917, such a disagreement did not reoccur. Accentuating Britishness at this time invariably meant that other ethnicities and races were considered to be of lesser importance. For example, despite a few complaints about the showing of D.W. Griffith's *The Birth of a Nation* in 1915, both the attorney general and Gordon thought the low number of blacks (or “negroes” as they were then termed) living in Vancouver made it a non-issue. They were more exercised the following year with an application from a Chinese man to be an operator at a Chinese-owned theatre in Cumberland, Vancouver Island. Gordon sought advice from the acting attorney general W.R. Ross

<sup>47</sup> Consul General R.E. Mansfield to W.J. Bowser, 23 April 1914, BCA, GR 1323-Bo2112-8619-15D-14.

<sup>48</sup> C.L. Gordon to W.J. Bowser, 28 April 1914, BCA, GR 1323-Bo2112-8619-15D-14.

<sup>49</sup> W.J. Bowser to R.E. Mansfield, 16 May 1914, BCA, GR 1323-Bo2112-8619-15D-14.

for, whereas Japanese and Chinese had been granted theatre licences for buildings they owned, an operator could conceivably work throughout the province. Ross's reply is revealing with regard to the state of race relations at the time: "It would seem to me to be a very dangerous precedent to give a license to a Chinaman not knowing where he was going to operate ... If he is simply going to go out and compete with white operators I should think under the circumstances it would be better to withhold your assent."<sup>50</sup>

Despite these later incidents, much of the pattern of work and many of the key issues had been resolved in 1914. By the end of this year, Gordon had reined in the theatres, the film exchanges, operators, municipalities, the police, the press, and his immediate superior in government. The office had moved to more spatial surroundings in the Vancouver Court House and now had two screening rooms. He would have constant complaints about censorship practice with regard to individual films and he refused to support a citizen- or industry-staffed appeal board, instead allowing the attorney general to be the final arbiter. He resisted the attempts of other provincial censorship offices to combine their efforts as he judged matters of taste to be different in British Columbia, being keenly aware that films were as much sourced by exchanges and independent theatre owners from the United States (through Seattle, San Francisco, and Los Angeles) as from eastern Canada. His 1915 annual report for the 1914 calendar year provides us with precise details of his operations and allows us to open other more general questions about showing films in the province as a whole.<sup>51</sup>

In looking at this report, one is struck by the profitability of the censorship exercise. Its income totalled \$19,695, and with salaries and expenses at \$10,620, the healthy balance was \$9,075.<sup>52</sup> To put this figure in some perspective, Gordon's salary was \$170 per annum, and that of his assistant censors was \$125. In sheer volume, Gordon processed seventy-five hundred reels in 1914. Of these, 8.4 percent (or 631) were banned, leaving 6,869. Gordon gave a detailed breakdown of his reasons for banning these films: the top three reasons were infidelity (173), seduction (65), and, as discussed above, the unnecessary display of US flags (50.5). Eighth on the list was white slavery (21) and tenth was Anti-British

<sup>50</sup> W.R. Ross to C.L. Gordon, 20 January 1916, BCA, GR 1323-B02134-9264-15-16.

<sup>51</sup> The 1914 annual report is found in C.L. Gordon to W.J. Bowser, 25 January 1915, BCA, GR 1323-B02125-989-15-15.

<sup>52</sup> This profit seems to have been shared by other provinces (as well as US states) involved in censorship. Gerald R. Butters Jr. relays that the Kansas censorship board was clearing \$1,000 profit per month in 1915. See his *Banned in Kansas: Motion Picture Censorship, 1915-1966* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2007), 62.

sentiment (18). A prudish anglophile presided at the helm of a conservative regime.

#### EXHIBITION IN VANCOUVER

With the absence of access to theatre and film exchange records, we cannot be sure how to translate those 6,869 approved reels into individual film titles. Ben Singer has provided figures for US production for 1914, but presumably films from Britain and France, in particular, made their way to Vancouver.<sup>53</sup> Even if we averaged two reels per film, which on Singer's US-only figures would be too generous, we have a minimum of 3,434 films that were exhibited in British Columbia in 1914. One could reasonably assume most of these films were scheduled for the province's largest city. Yet, research scanning the four major newspapers in Vancouver during this period only comes up with 556 titled films that were advertised in a quarter of the possible venues. Thus, just over 16 percent of the total number of films was worthy of newspaper endorsement. For the majority of theatre owners, their businesses did not depend on city-wide print communication. Walk-by traffic was significant, to which I've already alluded, but the twice-weekly changing of the roster of films, in addition to the fact that serials and newsreels were common fare and that vaudeville houses used films in their programs, the uniqueness of films was less important than was the everyday practice of attending them, no matter the subject matter.

It might seem unwise, given this low percentage of visibility, to compare the advertised films in Vancouver with those of other cities, such as Seattle, Winnipeg, Toronto, and Montreal. One might reasonably think, however, that the wealthy advertising theatres in each of these cities would likely show similar films. Research for this article does not support this finding. Scanning titles in newspapers in all these cities, and even allowing for a few months lag time for films to cross the continent (though only a week or two was needed), forces us to conclude that there was actually very little overlap among the cities. Thus, the cinematic experience, in 1914 at least, was for the most part unique to each city.<sup>54</sup> This fact helps to explain the reluctance of provinces to cooperate on

<sup>53</sup> See Ben Singer, "Feature Films, Variety Programs, and the Crisis of the Small Exhibitor," in *American Cinema's Transitional Era: Audiences, Institutions, Practices*, ed. Charlie Keil and Shelley Stamp (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 75–100.

<sup>54</sup> See the dataset in the collection *Screens in Vancouver: Cinemagoing and the City in 1914* at <https://open.library.ubc.ca/cIRcle/collections/facultyresearchandpublications/52383/items/1.0107294>. The average overlap of advertised films between cities seems to be in the order of 5 to 7 percent.

ensorship and underscores the huge importance of individual provincial censors. A six-week title comparison of Toronto and Vancouver, for example, between 12 April and 24 May 1914, produces the remarkable fact that, out of 234 advertised films screened between the two cities, only 14 or 6 percent overlapped.

Of these fourteen, eight were episodes from two serials: *The Adventures of Kathlyn* (Francis J. Grandon, 1913) and *Lucille Love, the Girl of Mystery* (Francis Ford, 1914). “Plucky” female heroines were clearly popular among audiences. There was indeed a serial craze in 1914 throughout North America, and so it would appear Vancouver was in step with other cities. Though it is currently a commonplace critical assumption within early cinema history studies in North America, the extrapolation from the popularity of the “serial queens” to imply a rising, female working-class audience is simply untenable on the West Coast.<sup>55</sup> In addition to the fact that women comprised only 40 percent of the population, they were less than 13 percent of the overall workforce in 1911, the year for which we have census figures. This low percentage compares badly with Winnipeg (18 percent) and Toronto (25 percent).<sup>56</sup> Thus it is not unreasonable to argue from the Vancouver experience that these serials were equally appealing to men.

Theatres at this time could not exhibit on Sundays, but they could be used for concerts and for approved fundraising efforts. In this regard, the licensing reverted to the city and was susceptible to capricious decisions. For example, when a Mrs. Atkins asked permission to use the Dominion Theatre on Sunday 15 March 1914 for an event to garner funds for destitute people being cared for at St. Paul’s Hospital, it was approved,<sup>57</sup> but when the Japanese Ladies Association of Vancouver requested permission to use the Star Theatre for a concert to raise funds for those suffering famine due to volcanic eruptions in Japan, it was refused.<sup>58</sup> While the city council may have decided only to approve Sunday events if their local or national benefit was clear, it is hard not to see a form of racial exclusionism entering its decision-making. It is in fact surprising that the Japanese Ladies Association made this request since the Sun Theatre on Powell Street, only a couple of blocks away from the Star Theatre, was at this time a Japanese-owned theatre with a licensed Japanese

<sup>55</sup> The best articulation of this connection between serials and the rising number of women in the workplace and early fan culture is Shelley Stamp, *Movie-Struck Girls: Women and Motion-Picture Culture after the Nickelodeon* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000).

<sup>56</sup> These census figures for the three cities are found in McDonald, *Making Vancouver*, 104.

<sup>57</sup> City Council minutes, 9 March 1914, 61, City of Vancouver Archives.

<sup>58</sup> City Council minutes, 23 February 1914, 45, City of Vancouver Archives.



Figure 3. Rex Theatre, West Hastings, ca. 1919. *Source:* City of Vancouver Archives, ref code: AM1535-CVA99-240 [A03120.TIF].

projectionist.<sup>59</sup> The Sun Theatre did, however, have a sporadic history of operation, as revealed in the local Japanese language newspaper, *Tairiku Nippo*, which advertised live performances and occasional screenings at a few regular theatres close to what was then known as Japantown.<sup>60</sup> One of its advance notices in early September 1914 announced that the Regal Theatre would be screening footage of the Japanese navy ships that visited Vancouver's port earlier that summer. And, in a nod to the controversial *Komagata Maru* incident, it highlighted that, along with these Japanese navy ships, the East Indian passenger ship could also be viewed, as could shots of Powell Street, where most Japanese lived and worked. Though the nearby Chinese population was three times

<sup>59</sup> To call it a theatre may be too lofty as references to it also characterized it as "The Sun Rooms," which would imply a multi-use venue.

<sup>60</sup> The Japanese language newspaper *Tairiku Nippo* [Continental daily news] served a Japanese community of some twenty-five hundred people in 1914. Aside from advertising the occasional use of the Sun Theatre, it also advertised events at the Avenue, Empress, Imperial, Regal, and Star Theatres.



Figure 4. Japanese Arch, Hastings near Main, ca. 1914. *Source:* City of Vancouver Archives, ref code: AM1376-CVA 458-1 [A36231.TIF].

the Japanese one, with two Chinese theatres in operation, there is no evidence that films were exhibited in them.<sup>61</sup>

## CONCLUSION

Lee Grieveson cogently argues that the emergence of censorship in the 1910s in the United States reflected anxieties around “mobile and changing population groups,” and this is certainly present in the topic at issue here.<sup>62</sup> Tensions between a growing, aspirant middle class and a majority working-class populace is found at the grassroots level of Vancouver civic governance. The moral and campaigning influence of the various Christian churches must be acknowledged as well. Arguments for seeing censorship of films and regulation of theatres as a response to modernity are not fully persuasive within BC’s traditional economic context of sawmill and cannery workers, longshoremen, construction

<sup>61</sup> Despite the current community plaque stating that silent films were screened at the Sing Kew Theatre in Shanghai Alley in Vancouver’s Chinatown in the 1910s, no hard evidence to confirm this statement has yet come to light.

<sup>62</sup> See Lee Grieveson, *Policing Cinema: Movies and Censorship in Early Twentieth-Century America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 202.

labourers, and railway employees. Rather, the institution of censorship in British Columbia was sparked into life by concern for the protection of juveniles and, specifically, by the debate over the Jeffries–Johnson fight film (which occurred amid fears pertaining to race relations). Once in operation, the censorship practice of British Columbia's first chief censor assisted the government's project of advancing and maintaining British-influenced values and perspectives within the province.