

DECISION

HAVING conducted a review of the film "The Fruit is Ripe" on 27 April 1979, and in accordance with its authority under the Cinematograph Films Act 1976, section 84 (5), and the Cinematograph Films Regulations 1977, Reg. 11 (2) (e), the Films Censorship Board of Review decided unanimously to approve the film for exhibition, to classify it as approved for exhibition to those aged 18 years and over and to direct the Chief Censor to enter the Board's decision in the Register of Films. The Board understands that the Chief Censor would have been prepared to approve the film for general exhibition subject to certain cuts, with an R16 certificate but that the applicant was not prepared to agree to any cuts.

"The Fruit is Ripe" is a West German production in which the young heroine leaves Munich and travels to the Greek Islands for what she describes as an odyssey of self-discovery. In the course of her largely amorous adventures, she confides her inner thoughts to a tape recorder at intervals. The film is dubbed into English dialogue.

In reaching its decision as to whether or not the film is likely to be injurious to the public good (section 26 (2)) the Board took into account particularly matters specified in (a), (b), and (c). In considering section 26 (2) (b), the Board agreed that, apart from its inclusion of a series of well-composed and attractive views of predominantly tourist interest, the film is artistically unexceptionable; the plot is tenuous, the characters are of cardboard thinness, the dialogue is stilted, lip synchronisation for the dubbed English dialogue is not always well achieved, and the acting is only adequate. As such the film is no better, and no worse, than many others of its kind. Turning to section 26 (2) (c), Board members concentrated on the two of several aspects detailed in the legislation as likely to be considered as injurious to the public good; viz: anti-social behaviour and sex. In the category of anti-social behaviour, members discussed at length the sequence in which, to arouse sexually a male they both dislike, and whom they correctly surmise to be a homosexual, two young women simulate a lesbian relationship. In a cafe they dance closely in front of him, fondling each other and, strolling in the nude along the foreshore, turn to embrace as the man follows at a distance. The question to be asked is whether the theme or the apparently overt depiction of a lesbian relationship constitute anti-social, or indecent behaviour of such a nature as to be injurious to the public good.

Until the 1950's, lesbianism was unthinkable as a screen subject. It was not until Lillian Hellman's "The Children's Hour" was refilmed as "The Loudest Whisper" in 1962, and even more notably in "The Killing of Sister George", which appeared in 1968, that the subject was accorded open and frank film treatment. In each of the productions referred to, lesbianism was central to the theme of the film, and each included scenes of considerably more intimate details than occurs in the film under review. "The Killing of Sister George" has, moreover, been seen recently on local television, albeit with cuts of the more explicit parts. Clearly, therefore, lesbianism *per se* as a subject cannot be considered as necessarily constituting anti-social or indecent behaviour and therefore injurious to the public good. In "The Fruit is Ripe" there is the added fact that the audience will be aware that a trick is being played and will consider it as such and as containing absolutely no suggestion of depicting a serious lesbian relationship. At worst, the scene could be said to be in poor taste.

The Board was divided however on whether or not to trim the "lesbian" scene. Four members voted to retain the sequence intact. Three (Mrs Forbes, Professor Dalziel, and Mr Beatson) voted to reduce the length of the scene, considering it over-long, even prurient out of the context of the film as a whole. The majority decision, however, prevailed.

That leaves the extent and degree to which and the manner in which the film depicts sex. Four scenes, in particular, call for comment. The first involves the heroine's meeting and spending the night in a small tent with a sexually liberated young man and woman. While much may seem to be suggested, little is shown to which exception can be taken. Of more concern, taking the four scenes in chronological sequence, is that of the love-making on the yacht between the heroine and the young journalist whom she meets and with whom she begins to develop what looks likely to be a genuinely loving relationship. Their love-making is observed by a frankly searching but never prurient camera. The entire scene, which lasts some three or four minutes, takes place to the accompaniment of a suitably romantic musical soundtrack, and though less soft-focussed and more explicit than the trend-setting "Hiroshima Mon Amour" of twenty years ago, it is no more so than what has been viewed in numerous

films since 1959. Members were unanimous that the manner in which the sequence was presented gave no grounds for any decision to excise or curtail it. Fellatio is certainly suggested in the beach frolic of the same couple shortly afterwards. The sequence is, however, so brief and generally so discreetly photographed as almost not to be noticed by the innocent among the audience. Again the brief passage in which the heroine is bedded by the Greek she has met casually in a bar, was held to be essential to the development of the narrative in that it takes place immediately after a "tiff" that separated the lovers temporarily, and shows the young woman to be utterly unreceptive to the man's ardent advances.

The Board did, however, have serious reservations about allowing the trailer for "The Fruit is Ripe" to be shown, tagged only with an R18 certificate. By its compression of a number of obviously more "juicy" sequences into the space of only a few minutes, it could give prospective audiences an impression that the film was one uninterrupted series of sexual encounters. As a result, the Board unanimously decided to curtail the opening scene in the trailer where the heroine reclines topless in a deckchair; to excise completely the sequence in which she is seen, gratuitously as it appears, to be slipping out of her jeans; and also to excise completely a third sequence, in which she poses nude on the deck of a luxury yacht while holding on to the rigging.

The Board therefore voted to approve the "trailer" for exhibition with an R18 certificate subject to the two excisions and one shortening of sequence as indicated.

Dated this 28th day of May 1979.

A. B. BEATSON, Chairman.

(I. A. Cul. 2/17/8)

The Standards Act 1965—Endorsement of Amendment to Overseas Specification

PURSUANT to section 17 of the Standards Act 1965, the Standards Council, on 18 April 1979, endorsed as suitable for use in New Zealand, the under-mentioned amendment to the relevant endorsed specification.

Number, Title, and Price of Specification
(Post free)

Amendment

BS 4370:— Methods of test for rigid cellular 1/1075 (75c)
materials—
Part 1:1968 Methods 1-5. \$6.05.

Copies of the specification so amended may be ordered from the Standards Association of New Zealand, World Trade Center, 15-23 Sturdee Street (or Private Bag), Wellington.

Copies of the amendment are obtainable separately.

Dated at Wellington this 7th day of June 1979.

DENYS R. M. PINFOLD,

Director, Standards Association of New Zealand.
(S.A. 114/2/10: 688)

The Standards Act 1965—Endorsement of Specification Cancelled

PURSUANT to section 17 of the Standards Act 1965, the Standards Council, on 25 May 1979, cancelled the endorsement of the under-mentioned specification.

Number and Title of Specification

BS 410:1969 Specification for test sieves.

Dated at Wellington this 7th day of June 1979.

DENYS R. M. PINFOLD,

Director, Standards Association of New Zealand.
(S.A. 114/2/12: 115)

The Standards Act 1965—Draft New Zealand Standard Specification Available for Comment

PURSUANT to subsection (3) of section 23 of the Standards Act 1965, notice is hereby given that the following draft New Zealand standard specification is being circulated.