

CENSORSHIP

When girls get trousered

TO CHIME in with the drive against pornography, Mr Maudling last week expressed his concern at the salaciousness of cinema posters. He recommended that the licensing authorities, usually the local councils, enforce their powers of censorship over posters much more thoroughly than to date.

In fact the British film industry already has a very strict code of self-censorship of posters which all major distributors observe faithfully. Every Tuesday 12 earnest men gather round a table at the offices of the Kinematograph Renters Asso-

ciation in Dean Street, Soho. They come from all over London these men, from the Evening Standard, the Evening News, London Transport, EMI, British Transport, the Rank Organisation and many other more obscure places besides. Together, but not in dirty raincoats, they gaze at filthy posters. Or rather, at all posters that might be considered filthy. That is, at all posters advertising X films to be shown in London.

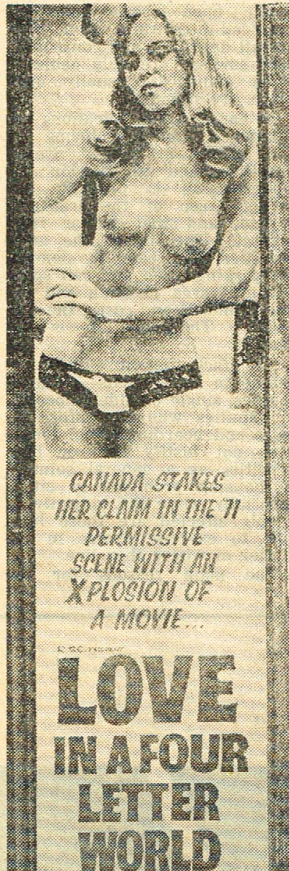
"We will not accept full frontal nudity in any form," says Mr Morton the president of the KRS. "No naked bosoms whatsoever. The Back View? Well, that's discretionary. This week we had a poster submitted to us which showed a girl in a bikini standing with legs akimbo. It was very inviting; a gift to graffiti artists. We decided that she must wear trousers."

One poster which the Committee amended last week was for Ken Russell's film of Tchakovsky, *The Music Lovers*. It was basically a poster of quotes from favourable reviews but it also included, beside a large head of the composer, a smaller drawing of his naked kneeling wife. It showed neither her breasts nor her pubic hair, but the Committee asked the advertising agency to clothe her in diaphanous chiffon in order to foil, once again, the eager men with pencil stubs who lovingly improve all works of art in the Underground.

Other film posters that have to be amended recently include that for Percy, the first transplanted penis, and *Soldier Blue*—the KRS Committee decided that the Indian girl's hands must be clasped behind her back to hide the cleavage of her buttocks.

But from Mr Maudling's and Lord Longford's points of view the snag in this self denying system lies in its very voluntariness. The cinemas and clubs which show sheer sex films do not have to submit their copy to the KRS: as this picture demonstrates they have nothing to lose by not doing so. They are nevertheless subject to censorship by the local watch committees and to prosecution by the police. Following last week's cries de coeur, they can probably expect the guardians of public morality to peer even more closely at their displays in future.

John Hodder



William Shawcross True blue in London

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